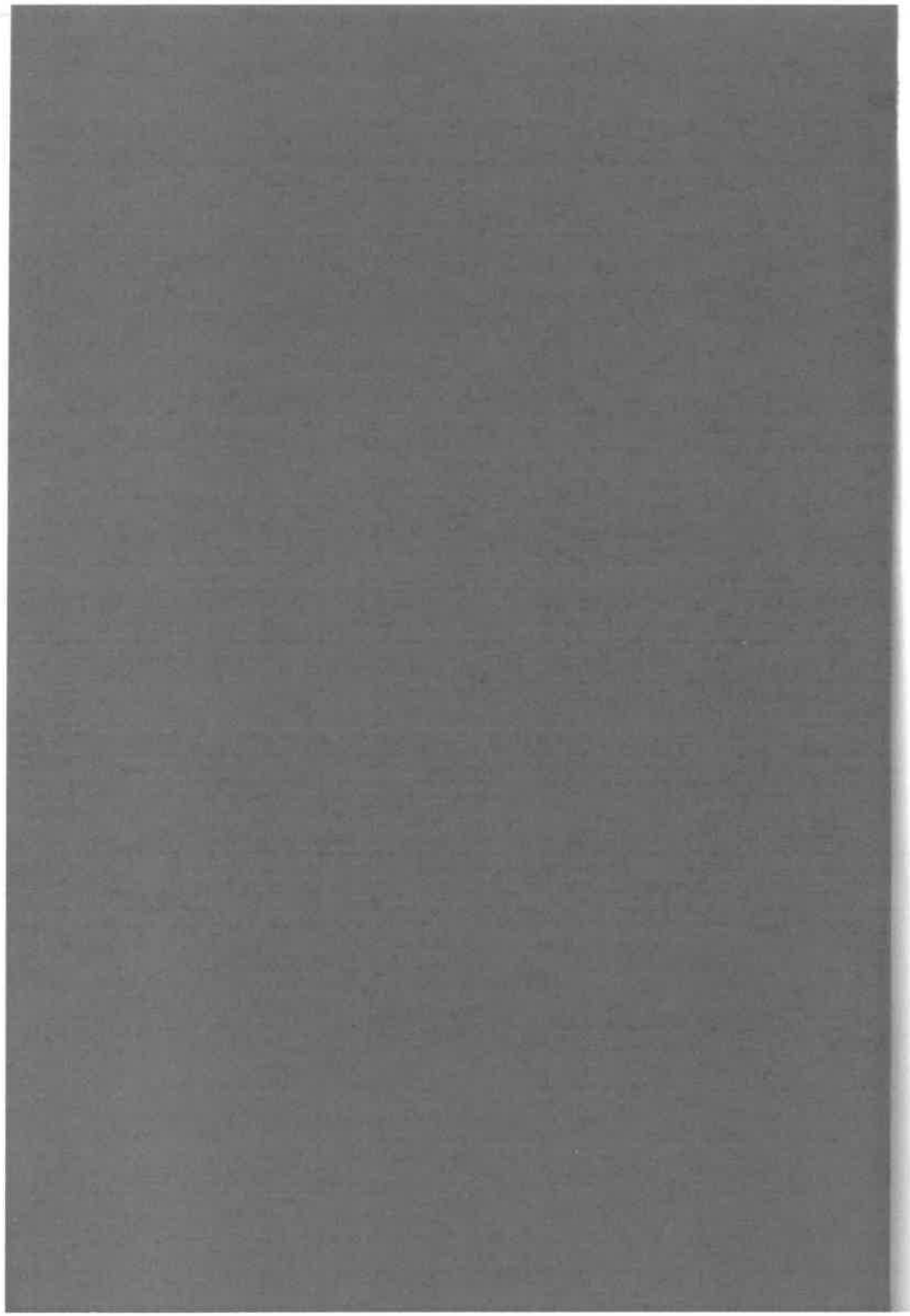

The DESTINY CHALLENGE

The DESTINY CHALLENGE

A Record of Spiritual Experience & Observation

KATE THOMAS

NEW FREQUENCY PRESS

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Cover photograph: The author at Findhorn Bay, Scotland, in 1988.

This book is complete in itself, but interested readers can find further detailed information concerning the author's early life and experience in Books 1 and 2 of her autobiography, namely *Signals from Eternity* and *Beloved Executioner*.

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Preface

This is the third volume of my autobiography. At the time it commences, in 1965, I was thirty-six years old. The two earlier volumes require some comment here. *Signals from Eternity* (Cambridge, 1984) is a record of my early life and preliminary inner experiences. I do not attach any importance to these experiences, I should make clear. They were of consequence only in the sequence in which they occurred. *Beloved Executioner* (Cambridge, 1986) is a little more complex, and describes my experiences during the phase of my life in which I was a follower of Meher Baba, whom I still acknowledge as being an exceptional entity, despite the fact that I am entirely unrelated to the movement associated with him. I subsequently outgrew the devotional attitude, though my own attitude was never actually typical of devotees in general.

Much of the content of *Beloved Executioner* was written in 1964, and accordingly reflects my attitudes and assumptions of that period. My additional comments of a later date attempted to qualify the core material without being unduly critical, for various reasons then appropriate. The appendix to that work was very inadequate, partly owing to my wish not to cause offence in certain directions. In the present book I have tried to rectify the omissions in that brief appendix, which thus adds to the material relevant to the year 1964.

The present volume reflects my more mature viewpoint, covering the years 1964–5 until the present time. I have endeavoured to make it a full length work, as the earlier volumes were perhaps rather brief for a three-volume project (I accept any criticism on that account, and do not claim to be a great writer). Various drafts have gone into the making of this book. The original draft of chapter nine was

written in 1977, immediately after the experiences recorded in that chapter.

I have attempted to adopt an analytical viewpoint in the following chapters, particularly the last two. Contrary to many current ideas about mysticism, the factor of analysis is crucial in my view, and the absence of it is a major defect in so-called holistic thought.

With regard to terminology, I have tried to use terms that are reasonably well known to most readers. I have made use of a number of Sanskrit terms, but claim no expertise in that language, and nor in others. I am not a scholar. My concern has been to communicate various experiences as clearly and graphically as possible, but there are many complexities in such experiences, and sometimes the description inevitably becomes a little complicated. One cannot simplify everything in published form.

Most people interested in spiritual development have encountered the word *kundalini*, though it is a much misunderstood word from the angle of my own experiences. Comparatively few people are familiar with the word *sanskara*, which means, in the plural context in which I have used it, the live impressions (lodged in the mental substance) that comprise the store of impulses which govern any one lifespan. Another, and more well known word used is *karma*, broadly meaning the law of cause and effect. A problem here is that this hallowed term is not clearly understood even in the East, where it is an accepted tenet of several religions. I found many discrepancies between what I actually experienced (in chapter nine) and what is generally accepted as valid information. The notion of *karma*, for instance, is often accepted fatalistically, without hope of change. Yet one of the most striking registrations made in my own experience related to the overall aspect of *freewill* for the individual. Although I saw the *inevitability* of the cause and effect process, I also saw that this pertained only to a *linear* level, the level of the everyday, mundane world; and that if an individual rose by his (or her) own inner efforts *above* that level, he was immediately placed in the position whereby he was given help by those further evolved than himself. This assistance enables the aspirant to begin to *transmute* these karmic effects into useful experience which, depending on various factors, could with time and further effort negate negative consequences entirely. Therefore, man can by his own disciplined freewill and constructive action, control his personal destiny by degrees and escape the grim round of heedlessness that perpetuates *karma* indefinitely. This matter relates to what I have called the "destiny challenge," which does not imply any fatalism at all. This perspective is antithetical to the New Age concept of "creating your own reality," which amounts to a relativism of seriously hindering

proportions. There is only one reality underlying the spiritual path, whatever cults and fashions of individualism choose to make of it.

Finally here, one epistle reproduced in chapter fourteen describes me as a "Sufi instructor." This description was not made at my behest, though it was very well intentioned. I do not claim to be such. My position is simply that of an experiencer and observer. I cannot undertake to instruct anyone. In conducting my former research centre, the written course, with its emphasis upon self-analysis, proved too exacting for most students, and I am not interested in attracting superficial attention should I ever undertake such a literary and metaphysical project again. Mysticism is not an easy subject, however much it is degraded on current markets of exploitation, a topic about which I feel strongly. Many people have not yet learned the basic distinction between mysticism and occultism, to name but one of the confusions attendant upon the subject.

Kate Thomas
January 1992.

CHAPTER 14

A New Age Community

The inner teaching is often elusive in the material world. Despite this, many people persist in believing that it can somehow be squeezed out of the most crass channels at their instant whim. Hence we have nowadays the ridiculous situation of "spirituality" or "mysticism" being treated as compatible with the current phase of Western capitalism, i.e., spirituality is imagined to reside in "courses" and "workshops" run by presumed mystics for exorbitant fees. What is taught in these lucrative channels is far too often merely a reflection of the current Western pursuit of emotion-based therapy and permissive lifestyles, indulgences dressed up as mysticism, with a few high-sounding cliches thrown in for bad measure in an attempt to convince the audience that this is the real thing that is being proffered for a tidy sum and a show of vainglory.

I once showed David a brochure advertising various courses and workshops in the current "mystical" vogue, arranged by an organization in the south of England. He looked at it, noticed the photographs of the various entities feted as experts in mysticism, and remarked: "A selection of pretty pictures of celebrities enjoying themselves while gaining fame and money. Exciting it may be for them, but it is proof that they are not illumined."

When pressed for his views, he said that real teachers, of whatever grade, did not take "workshops," which are distractions created by the vulgar. There are many of this "worst type of capitalist," he said, who charge large amounts for potted and distorted teachings which they have never properly practiced. "One might just as well consult those psychics who charge film stars ridiculous amounts for telling their future. I dare say that some of

the film stars are actually more knowledgeable than the psychics and presumed mystics."

He said further that honest materialist businessmen were better than the exploiters of mysticism. Even the best of the "media mystics" should be *learning* their subject, not teaching it. Some were drop-out academics and supposed healers. Many gained a livelihood by confusing mysticism with alternative therapy. Some registered as charity organizations in order to make money that would not be taxed. The worst element harnessed Neo-Reichian concepts of permissiveness in order to make an easy impact upon sensually minded people. Such tangents can easily flourish in capitalist society, which has no operative values save those attached to commerce. While many exponents taught variations of alternative therapy, some claimed to transmit a modern version of all the ancient mystical traditions. "Very naive, all you have to do is believe them and pay the fee." He thought that some of these people were psychologically unbalanced, though many others were merely taking advantage of a lucrative trend. He was very suspicious of the New Age talk about criticism being an evil, as this had such obvious advantages for those advertised as workshop leaders. David said he knew of one New Age superstar who had his notepaper embossed with his name in large, splendid letters. "Of course, one must be suitably impressed by such credentials – if you are totally gullible and largely illiterate, that is."

He was very unimpressed by such New Age concepts as "unconditional love," "integration of the personality" (a Jungian theme), and criticism of others necessarily being a projection of one's own guilt. The attendant misapprehensions, magnified in workshops, too often justified personality kinks and permitted breaches of conduct that would elsewhere be considered scandalous. Some New Age centres were associated with casual sex and drug problems, while others promoted courses in magic. There were even advocates of LSD psychotherapy. "I prefer the Old Age. More progressive."

Owing to the activities of the workshop bandwagon, David considered that effective mystical teaching had been eclipsed and stifled. A substantial number of people could not tell the difference between authentic spirituality and the banal caricature flourishing on the media. He pointed out that a very common refrain in such brochures as the one I had shown him was to insist upon "the important relationship between spirituality and sexuality in the integration of the self." He added with amusement, "What they should of course insist upon is the important distinction *between* spirituality and sexuality *if* it is the integration of the *spiritual* self that is sought."

He burst out laughing at a phrase found in the caption to a workshop on the "transformative quest." This phrase read: "These

workshops form a logical sequence but need not be taken in order." He remarked: "They are certainly not aiming for precision, are they? Just turn up when you feel like it, and hey presto!"

The entrepreneurial New Age scene features those who exploit concepts of "self change," interpreting this in a rabidly commercial manner that has serious implications for the mental health of those who are taken in by this. I was given one advertising brochure which proclaimed: "Thanks to new technology and contemporary awareness of how the mind works, change no longer has to be difficult." This brochure was advertising "Video Hypnosis," using, so it declared, "effects which turn you inward." But some titles of the video tapes being promoted for sale are extremely extroverted, e.g., "Create Wealth," "Love Myself – Self-Esteem," "Charisma," "Develop Psychic Ability," "Attracting Love," "Sports Improvement," "Sensational Sex." Also in fashionable evidence here was "Chakra balance," a topic which may be considered very suspicious in this context.

When requested to give a definition of what was here being sold, David commented: "A commercial form of hypnosis, typical of the worst sector of the New Age superstars, who are trying to produce a monster race of greedy, indulgent, and egoistic people, fostering all their bad qualities and neglecting to educate them. The real fact is that there is very little contemporary awareness of how the mind works, and that the victims are here being taught an undesirable form of self-change on a purely materialistic level. It reflects the aggregate Western idea of what the 'self' is – something to abuse, indulge, preen, and score over others with . . ." He also observed that, although there was a deference to themes like "Increase Self-Discipline," what this really meant was summed up in the persuasive sentence selling related cassettes: "All it takes is the self-discipline to keep using the tape." It was not self-discipline but self-deception which was in process, prompted by commercial programming to subliminal suggestions such as "Love Myself."

Though I agreed with the critics that much was wrong with the New Age, I still felt that there could be many individuals in their ranks who might display redeeming features. When I decided to stay for a period at the Findhorn Foundation, David expressed concern. Yet although a critic of the New Age, his attitude was not unreasonable. He was willing to recognize that there might be positive elements if I could find them, but he was very sceptical. He feared that the outcome could be negative for me, and anticipated that I would meet difficult and irrational people. In view of my inclination to investigate, he said that he would suspend any judgement of the Foundation, although he had heard discouraging reports about the lack of a code of honour at New Age venues.

* * *

Although I had so far encountered fairly numerous "New Age" organisations, I had never yet been to the largest one in the U.K., namely the Findhorn Foundation in the far north of Scotland, founded in 1962 by Eileen and Peter Caddy and Dorothy Maclean. It was the most publicised, and had the repute of being the leading "spiritual centre" in Britain. Some of its partisans said that it was more important than any in America, and that it exerted a more spiritual influence than any of its American counterparts.

In March 1988, after finishing the first full draft of the present book, I experienced a strong inner directive to go to the north of Scotland, and specifically to the Findhorn Foundation. This, despite the fact that I had certain disquieting feelings about that organisation, whose earliest days from its unlikely beginnings in association with the "Universal Link"* and the much publicised phenomenon known as the "Weeping Angel of Worthing" (a picture belonging to a business man that suddenly began to produce tears and was investigated by various interested research bodies), I had followed somewhat incredulously via circulars presented to me by Maud S., who was an early visitor to what later became the Findhorn Foundation. Most of the "Universal Link" adherents joined forces with the Caddy's following the demise from cancer of their founder. This unfortunate lady (Liebe Pugh) was obliged *in extremis* to "earth the energies" for the new movement by sitting with her pain-racked limbs in bowls of water.

In my rational mind, I was aware that I would have to personally investigate before coming to any concrete conclusion with regard to this Community. Clearly, this well-established organisation had to be reckoned with if one was to take the New Age movement at all seriously.

Apart from hearsay, my information concerning the Foundation was mostly derived from reading their magazine, *One Earth*, over a number of years. It seemed of late to be reflecting less and less of an emphasis upon spirituality and more and more of a therapy context. Yet it was apparent that the Foundation had a floating population to a substantial extent – many members disappeared from the scene after several years, often moving on to America, and the emphasis appeared to change according to the biases of the current membership. Nevertheless, the clearly expressed belief of the Foundation was that it was the spearhead of the New Age movement, and in the forefront of planetary changes that were preparatory to the "leap in

*established by Liebe Pugh and Kathleen Fleming through the latter's "channelling" of an entity known as "Limitless Love and Truth."

consciousness" humanity must make. The organisation also described itself very firmly as a spiritual community. Surely, therefore, there would be some interest in the matters on which I had so recently written?

When I arrived at the Foundation in mid-March 1988, I stayed at its major site known as the Park, near the village of Findhorn. On later visits, with one exception, I was accommodated in Cluny Hill College in the nearby "floral" town of Forres. I was slightly gratified to find that it was commonly believed by the members that nobody went there by chance. Was this a commercial sentiment, or was it a genuine attitude of unbiased tolerance? On closer investigation, this belief more precisely applied to people who became resident members, or who came to live in the area. These people comprised only a bare minority amongst the four thousand or so visitors who poured through the Foundation every year, usually for programmes lasting one week, two weeks, or a month, with the bonus of the occasional Conference.

There was a large membership of over a hundred residents, and a similar, rapidly expanding number of Associate members. The greatest importance attached to the staff positions which some of the resident members filled. These "focalisers" were the people who made the actual decisions in the life of the community. Various members also ran courses and workshops, and on a financial basis to acquire an income. The predominant nationality of the membership was American, though Germans and Australians were much in evidence. There were comparatively few English people, and even fewer Scots, amongst them. Women members were well in the majority, and the principal age group was approximately twenty-five to forty-five years. The Director, Craig Gibsone, a youthful looking man in his late forties, was an Australian and had been resident for the greater part of an eighteen year period, during the earlier years of which he had focalised the community in Peter Caddy's frequent absences. He was now two years into his self-set term of Directorship, a period he intuited as five years. There had been several Directors before him. I gathered that many disagreements had arisen, and numerous problems, both economic and social, were encountered during the various terms of office.

In my earliest discussions with members, several of them assured me that the Foundation had begun to attract persons of a more serious disposition than formerly, persons who were obviously in search of inner growth and were clearly aware of their own need for guidance. This influx of genuine aspirants, they said, was in response to the more specific slant of their current literature, which included their magazine *One Earth*, the latter containing many reprinted

articles and selected quotations from the writings of revolutionary thinkers who were making important discoveries in the fields of ecology, physics, and psychology. The statements about aspirants sounded promising, but I could not help noticing that there was very little science evident in the actual life of the community. The revolutionary thinkers were not resident at the Foundation, and I began to suspect that persons like the late Professor Schaefer, a genius in ecological physics, would not have felt entirely comfortable with the rather casual attitudes often discernible. Yet on a purely manual level, some hard work was accomplished by some members. Only recently, it seemed, had they been able to start on the projected planetary village which had been anticipated for many years.

The environmental potential was substantial, and the property impressive. Scenically situated near Findhorn Bay, the main centre (The Park) was spread over a number of acres. Visitors like myself enthused over the scenery, though there was a drawback in the NATO airbase close by. Cullerne House, a little further along the road on the village side, is set in extensive and beautiful gardens where most guests opt to work if they get the opportunity. Its excellent accommodation is used to house members, and a large, handsome ground-floor room is utilised for many courses. Station House, in the village itself, is a quaint and sprawling property surrounding a pretty courtyard and, again, specifically for members. Less well-known were the properties in Forres, three large and imposing houses each set in their own grounds, at all of which I spent course sessions. Here, there were somewhat discouraging signs – Newbold House was considered the extremist wing of the Foundation, with rather strange and excessive practices actively encouraged by the person in charge, whom I met. Drumduan House was in process of being re-leased to the Rudolf Steiner organisation for use as a Steiner school. It was only Cluny Hill College that was regarded as the bastion of the Foundation, and economic policies clearly loomed large in various arrangements.

In many respects I preferred the small town of Forres to the Park, part of which is a commercial caravan park for visitors largely unconnected with the Foundation. There were some visits I made to the Park when I felt a rather discordant emanation, which I found upsetting. Several members confirmed the accuracy of these feelings – a number of them were worried at what they felt to be a decline of spiritualized vibration in certain key centres of the Park. There was also the positive side to take into account. They were seeking new members, they told me, particularly people who could teach and who were not above lending a hand in the kitchens, or who wished to set up small businesses in any field compatible with what they were doing.

What *were* they doing? This was difficult to discern. If I stayed

around for a while I would see for myself, they said. They were a planetary centre and forming a planetary village . . . I conveyed that I wished to found a small school, one solely concerned with evolutionary studies that required combination with more physical activities. If I could do this I would transfer my work from Cambridge. I could make my own arrangements or live within the community – whatever opened out for me. I would happily participate in their work and become a member of their Foundation, in order to share their aims and the environmental facilities they offered. Facilities such as I had no hope as yet of providing for my own students. I offered my services unreservedly, and entirely free.

Yet the focalisers and the Director were notably resistant to any such suggestion. They alone were the teachers here – that is, apart from the prestigious visiting entities who were well publicised. I was unknown, and so could not be classified as a teacher of any kind. I would first have to undergo the standard procedure to become a focaliser before I could work alongside them. This procedure entailed a two-year full-time working commitment as a Student Member and fees in advance for the entire period, a sum totalling £2,000 which I did not then have. I briefly mentioned my experiences of 1977, but these were dismissed as of no consequence, and those concerned were unwilling to read my recent manuscript. These experiences were classified by those in authority as "visionary experience," an obscure category that was held in great distrust unless the visionary was known on the commercial New Age media. This seemed a very odd priority to me, but it was extremely difficult to argue any point with these people. They did not wish to hear. They persisted in classifying me as a psychic. They had encountered psychics before and had "given them their head," only to find they were deluded. There were several psychics amongst the elite members, I noticed, (all of whom charged fees for their services, one advertising £20 sittings on the community noticeboard), but I refrained from pressing this point. I gave my credentials, although naturally, nobody had heard of me. That was quite understandable, and I fully accepted the absence of fame and importance, but there were certain attitudes encountered which did not seem so understandable, at least to me. For instance, I proffered my three published books which nobody, it appeared, had the inclination to even look at, let alone read.

One of the most offhand reactions to my literature came from Andrew Murray, the Editor of *One Earth*. He was aloof and distant, and made it quite plain that he was not interested in reviewing my books. It was clear that he and his assistants were keen on reviewing books about various therapies, and mine definitely did not come under this category. Perhaps mine were insufficiently sensational to

merit such complete lack of attention, although one of them had achieved selection as "Book of the Month" for June 1986 by the Psychic Book Society, London. However, this slight degree of fame was not sufficient to elicit the slightest acknowledgement from the Foundation focalisers.

Thinking that perhaps I was at fault for not making my standpoint clear enough, I also offered the first draft of the present book for the Editor's perusal. I briefly stated the nature of my experiences, which were not psychic in the common sense of the word. The Editor was wholly non-committal and did not accept my offer. He seemed to take it as proof that I was not famous and could therefore safely be ignored. His manner was very curt.

Afterwards I asked a female member of the Foundation why Andrew Murray had been so rude and abrupt with me. Her response was not without sympathy. "Oh, Andrew's often like that," she said, "he still gets his 'off' days when he's very depressed." It seemed that during the several years he had been resident at the Foundation, he had been "drying out" from an acute phase of alcohol addiction. It was therefore the more disconcerting to discover that he was considered to be a therapist and counsellor, with a basic knowledge of *chakras*, and so forth. In one of his Editorials, he wrote that "smelly feet" were the product of *chakra* disorders, though I beg to disagree with this diagnosis. Yet his principal interest seemed to be windsurfing in the Moray Firth, possibly a better therapy for his problems than his other activities.

The educational aspect of the Foundation continued to puzzle me. It became clear that Cluny Hill College was a College of therapy, and that it differed from more conventional colleges in removing the factor of analysis in favour of an outright enthusiast approach to every therapy promoted by the Foundation. If one dared to criticise any feature of the courses or workshops in occurrence, one was promptly informed that the problem lay in one's own psychological projections. This placed any protest at an immediate disadvantage, and focalisers were quite inflexible on this point.

I seemed to have got off to a bad start with my rather questioning disposition in such matters. Yet the urge to continue persisted. So much could be done here, was perhaps being done at this very moment, unperceived by me. This place was clearly regarded as the central hub of the whole New Age movement in the West; there was no doubt that it was widely considered to set the tone for whatever that movement initiated at the present time. It had definite links with all the main centres in America, including the influential Esalen Institute in California, and also with many other centres throughout the world. I had ascertained that Foundation members were invited

to instruct other organisations and were held in high regard by all those in similar fields of therapy and counselling. I felt that I should make a more thorough investigation, leaving no stone unturned, and suspend any criticism. Only in this way could I shelve the subliminal registrations tentatively surfacing in my mind.

From March to the end of August my attention was therefore almost exclusively focussed upon this prominent New Age centre, and nearly half of that time was spent in residence within the community. During this period I entered fully into the life of a student, this being the only way to remain there indefinitely and gain any credence. I attended three separate courses tutored by resident staff, and involved myself with guests and members, experiencing every facet of community living; working in homecare, kitchens and gardens, and immersing myself generally in all aspects of the New Age phenomenon. But I got nowhere with my wish to communicate the essence of what had happened to me, of my conscious experience of what our life on earth *is for*. Members simply did not wish to know, being too busy with courses, personal relationships, love affairs, ego-trips, power games, and having a good time.

I met many seekers and aspirants while I lived within the community. They were drawn from all parts of the Western world in search of tuition and growth, and I noted their increasing perplexity in face of the non-traditional techniques to which they were subjected throughout the coursework. Many, of course, responded with great enthusiasm to these techniques and doubtless gave glowing reports on their return home which caused others to come and try them for themselves. But the more sensitive of their number with whom I talked were distressed, even shocked, by some of the things they had encountered, and left with much disillusionment and in states that were definitely not to their advantage.

The courses certainly provide emotional release, and are frequently exhilarating and great fun – if this is what you are seeking – for the whole ethos is overtly therapeutic in context and may even be useful if you are someone in need of psychotherapy. But if you wish to quicken your consciousness and develop your innermost being, then the Findhorn Foundation can take you nowhere, though this it seriously purports to do. Its focalisers, in general, are without intuitive perception and sadly lacking in sensitivity. There is no knowledge of the science of energies, and those in charge are ignorant of the forces released by their potent practices and randomly applied exercises.

My own feelings about this situation were very clear-cut. I had gone there as an observer and also as a participant, and soon realised that much that went on was done in ignorance or in the misguided

belief that it was legitimate. The Foundation was "fed" by many speakers regarded as teachers and spiritual guides, whose ideas and *modus operandi* were utilised and incorporated in the general courses run by members; and many members brought in exercises and techniques from elsewhere and used them because they actually "worked," meaning they produced an emotional effect. How, and why, and what the end results would be, did not concern them. The techniques were effective for the time their courses lasted, and this was seemingly enough.

There is no screening of applicants at Cluny Hill College (in Forres), the Foundation's main venue for its educational programmes, although all must take an "Experience week" before attending any courses. In my "week," the group consisted mainly of Americans, and included five persons "drying out" from the very recent effects of alcoholism and drugs, all of whom had psychological problems, and one of whom had twice been admitted to a psychiatric hospital by her own admission. With these disturbed people the rest of us were closely enmeshed through "attunements" and meditations, plus the use of numerous techniques and exercises designed to bond any grouping of widely differing personality types. When I protested to the two focalisers (group leaders) in charge (Cally Miller-Simpson and Dianne Falasca) that the effects on myself in terms of the absorption of negative energies were extremely unpleasant and caused me to feel ill and devitalised, I was firmly and unsympathetically put in my place. The problem was mine – within *me*, and for *me* to deal with. If I was psychic, I should have learned long ago how to insulate myself, as "others" did. It was recognised that I was *not* a bad mixer, nor making criticisms of my fellow students, with all of whom I was on good terms. It was simply *not understood* that energies transmit in such collective situations through the attunements and "sharings" that took place with monotonous regularity. During the sharings, personal case histories of the more lurid kind were frequently elicited, and the more extroverted participants soon found this a useful way to gain everyone's attention and the encouragement of the focaliser, as everything stopped for this.

The mixture of deliberately heightened awareness (via the many meditations) and the emotional release operative in "sharings," plus the discharged energies circulated through follow-up attunements, is a disastrous matter for the genuinely psychic, the ultra-sensitive, and the aspirant struggling to screen out the type of impulses that would never be introduced deliberately into their vulnerable systems by a responsible developmental school. It is traditional in all such schools, and incumbent upon those in authority, to protect their students

from these very situations. At the Findhorn Foundation the opposite condition ensues, and I was told that the many small dramas I witnessed were nothing to what *could* happen. A guest had been known to run amok at night and rush, stark naked, along the corridors of Cluny Hill College screaming with unleashed emotion. Another guest committed arson in both the sanctuary and the dining room. It was common knowledge among staff that around Wednesday of any Experience week, *anything* might happen and the atmosphere of the College and the working abilities of those within it could be seriously impaired.

Later, I learned that I had been effectively blacklisted through my protests and labelled as "difficult" and not desirable as a group participant. To this was subsequently added the results of exchanges with other focalisers, none of whom were concerned with the possible truth of my warnings, for these were never investigated or given any credence. The concern of these focalisers was primarily with the successful completion of the current course which guaranteed an ongoing income for the community in general and some individuals in particular. If people were satisfied, others would come through their recommendations, and those who were "difficult" like myself, were readily dispensable.

And others *were* "difficult." While I was in residence, guests for various reasons refused to continue with what they had come for, and were despatched home quietly with a refund. Dissatisfied members left, and stated why; and both members and visitors sent in critical letters which were suppressed. One such letter was pinned to the noticeboard for about fifteen minutes – only long enough for myself and the staff member who took it down, to read it. It was from a lady in her early sixties who had used her life savings to come to the Foundation, but who was genuinely distressed by the sexual attitudes of several focalisers and the sexually explicit material used for one of their talks. She did not feel this to be necessary or in keeping with the dissemination of spiritual values – the world outside was quite bad enough, and she had not expected to find the same thing *here*.

The sexual attitudes within the Foundation were not my prime consideration, but the use of neo-Reichian and other techniques, including those retrieved from outmoded developmental systems, were for me a matter of grave concern. Many of these latter had been adapted by fringe therapists and incorporated into modern psychotherapeutic practice *because they produce effects*. Through this means such techniques have come to the attention of persons attending weekend or longer courses in London and elsewhere, and are swiftly appropriated by would-be therapists and experimenting

teachers and absorbed into the curriculums of other New Age ventures. The impact of many of these techniques is not in dispute, but the lack of knowledge of what they initiate, and their long-term effects allied to a total lack of control of any consequence, should be of major interest to all those exposed to them.

A case in point occurred during the Youth Project fortnight held while I was at the Foundation. One sixteen year old girl told the youthful focalisers soon after her arrival that she had slashed her own limbs with a razor blade under stress, which clearly indicated that she had a problem. They decided she "needed love" and let her stay, and then exposed her to the full range of Findhorn "Experience week" techniques, the result being that two persons stayed up all one night to prevent the girl from further damaging herself (having first called in a doctor) and returned her to her home the next day accompanied by two senior members of staff who did not leave her on her own for one minute, so serious was the situation. Human error can occur in any profession and is a sad fact of life, and in this case the intention to help was certainly present, but here we have youthful, undiscerning, and unqualified people in charge of unscreened and very young applicants, administering techniques expressly designed to open up the emotions and affect the psyche, which proved too much for this particular individual. The girl's roommate, the highly intelligent daughter of two Canadian psychologists, told me how greatly she had been distressed by what she realised was inexperience and insufficiently attentive attitudes. This had spoilt the entire fortnight as far as she was concerned, and the needless shock she experienced will linger long in her mind.

I have myself witnessed several persons wandering around Cluny Hill College during various courses who were obviously suffering mental abnormalities (observed also, to my knowledge, by more than one focaliser), but who were nevertheless permitted to participate in closely-knit groupwork for a one to two week period, taking part in the frequent daily attunements and the regular meditations, both of which transmit energies from one person to another; in fact, this is part of the bonding process within any given group there. For the more sensitive and psychic, such close association with the mentally abnormal is extremely detrimental, and they are usually fully aware of their disadvantaged position but are too nervous to protest in such a love-stressed yet wholly *un*comprehending atmosphere – or *if they do* protest, are told, as I was, that the problem is within themselves. The effects can prove exceedingly disruptive and depressive, continuing long after the course has ended, and adversely affecting the lives of people who have a right to protection from this type of invasion (exposure by "attunement" to disturbed

or malfunctioning brainwaves). In a competent organisation, such situations would simply not arise. But the Findhorn Foundation publicity claims this status of a competent organisation.

Later, during my time of living within the community, even more serious matters came to the fore. On one occasion during the "sharing" preceding homecare operations, a young woman broke down quite shatteringly and told us of the prolonged incestuous behaviour of her father during her years of late childhood and early adolescence. For her, this proved cathartic and a real emotional release, and all work was suspended to give her a chance to clear her system with our support. I have no doubt at all that this was very beneficial, and the person concerned was deeply grateful and much affected. But for the others who happened to be there it was far less satisfactory. The energies released were almost tangible, and extremely unpleasant, and two of the women present, fresh from the "opening up" process of Experience week (and therefore emotionally vulnerable) were most distressed for quite a time afterwards. Even one of the focalisers later confessed to having been adversely affected. My viewpoint was that, useful though this event may have been to one individual, its psychotherapeutic nature was out of context in this setting. The two women referred to had come to the College for the purposes of inner development, and had "opened" themselves in trust of this. What they had received into their deliberately sensitised systems produced a state of shock and was highly detrimental to them – and this kind of situation happens *continually* through the mixing of different levels of activity and the precipitating "X" factors of which the focalisers are unaware.

One of the incidents that blocked my possibility of membership occurred during a meeting of the large "Living in Community" group, and arose when the focaliser sponsored an amateur attempt at psychotherapy. A Norwegian youth who showed signs of disturbance, was actively pressurised by an American university student (female) to pummel a cushion and release his impacted emotions of anger and frustration. He did not wish to do this because of the strength of his own feelings, of which he was clearly afraid, and also because of his obvious uncertainty regarding the girl's ability to assist him. I tried to prevent the exercise as I did not agree with her diagnosis and nor the way she enforced her viewpoint. The male focaliser ignored my efforts to intervene and allowed the girl to have her head, perhaps because she was very attractive and persuasive. When induced to proceed, the Norwegian unleashed a torrent of rage into the room which affected many others in the group, who rapidly lost their formerly defined personalities and urged him on with the primitive fervour of a football crowd. The focaliser could not control

their behaviour, and I felt so appalled (and sick) that I left. The young Norwegian said later that apart from a brief feeling of release, the frenzied outburst had not in any way removed his problem. This I consider to be amateur bungling that could have unpredictable and undesirable results in unstable persons. No-one present had any qualification to conduct an emotional catharsis, nor did they have any idea of the root cause of this person's state of conflict, which in my view had nothing to do with repression by his father in childhood as assumed by the American girl, an assumption which the focaliser was naively prepared to accept.

I was afterwards severely censured for my departure from the scene by this focaliser, Alec Whittam (a senior staff member relieving the regular focaliser, who was unable to be present). This man felt embarrassed by the incident and said he considered me a disruptive influence and that "no focaliser would want you in their group." He added his viewpoint to that of the regular focaliser, Charles Peterson, whose entire group had "sent me to Coventry" on the first afternoon of my attendance for asking what being an LCG entailed and how significant (in a spiritual sense) it was for each of the participants – which delayed the concensus desire to play games (quite literally) outside in the sunshine. I asked this because I had not, as yet, encountered the demonstration of "a conscious connection with Spirit," or sampled an "in-depth experience of a centre dedicated to planetary transformation," as advertised for this programme. My question was not answered by Mr. Peterson, whose principal concern at the time was circle dancing and accommodating the holiday wishes of those in his charge. This man chose to publicly humiliate me when I later queried his refusal to put forward my application for membership,* and to such an extent that Malcolm, one of my students who was present on the occasion, went out into the garden and wept with distress at what he witnessed.

* * *

Early in my contact with the Foundation, I met the founder, Eileen Caddy, on whose "inspirational" messages and visions the venture subsists. She allowed me a quite lengthy interview that left me feeling perplexed, for her principal concern was her former husband's recent remarriage (for the fifth time) and the pain he (Peter) had caused her, and very little was mentioned regarding my 1977 experience (the reason for the interview) in which she showed only minimal interest. The problem here was that despite her visions, her range of experience was limited and she dismissed all visions save her own as

*a decision supposedly arrived at by meditative "attunement."

of very little significance. Many people have visions, she said, and they frequently try to impose them upon the Foundation. Most of them referred solely to personal growth or were the product of delusion. I agreed that this was so, and tried to stress the unusual nature of what had happened to me – which, in fact, was not a vision at all. Surprisingly, she did not really want to know, and I found this indifference quite strange.

Nor did she wish to know what was sold in the bookshop of her own Foundation, though I persisted in telling her, as I had found this matter almost beyond belief. My particular concern was the large selection of Tarot cards on sale which prominently featured de luxe decks of Aleister Crowley's own design, still in use by his followers and the current exponents of his practices, and carrying the active energies of this self-styled "Black Magician" and "Great Beast." She expressed appropriate concern and said she would "walk down in the morning and have a word with the Manager." I reminded her that such artefacts attract energies consistent with those they represent, and that these would eventually influence the type of membership and guests that were drawn to the Foundation. I later told the Foundation's Director, Craig Gibsone (who was also a Trustee), assuming he did not know, and elicited a similar response; and finally mentioned the matter to the Manager of the Phoenix Bookshop, who was frankly neither interested nor concerned. Over six months later the same packs of cards were still being sold. I was not the only person who observed this glaring incongruity, wholly at variance with the concept of an evolutionary "leap."

A year later, one of the chief assistants in the Phoenix Bookshop was asked by my student, Malcolm, about his preference for Aleister Crowley. This assistant had been annoyed that there had been a complaint against the Tarot cards abovementioned. Malcolm described Aleister Crowley as a black magician, but the bookshop assistant responded that his hero was "not black, though perhaps grey." This man stated that he had been studying the Crowley literature for seven years. I wonder how sinister anybody has to be before being described as a "black magician" at the Findhorn Foundation. Women, in particular, should be very careful before committing themselves in grey directions. Crowley liked to send his ladyfriends insane, in addition to cultivating literal vampire characteristics and indulging in sadistic orgies. All readers should be aware that Crowley's Tarot cards and insignia are widely used in the type of magical group which selects children as victims, though they would doubtless insist that they are merely "loving children."

Eileen Caddy teaches that one is *already* a Christ-filled being and that affirmations of this condition are *all that is necessary* for interior

development. One should "love oneself" with all one's faults and accept oneself just as one is. Self-examination is not a requirement, and the correction of flaws is never mentioned. Everything is up to the individual. Whatever unpleasantness is meted out by another is considered a projection of one's own problems and can only be countered within oneself, by changed attitudes – which ensures that none are rebuked and very little is altered. She furthermore makes clear that we need no teacher, and will take no responsibility for those who accept her dictums; the way must be found by oneself through attention to the inner voice. (This "inner voice" may be valid enough for those who can discern it, but in my view is fraught with danger for those who cannot and who follow delusory voices instead). She states that we also have power to make major changes in our lives and to "create our own reality" by positive thinking and affirmations. Above all else we must "love unconditionally," something that all members of the Findhorn Foundation assume they can do. This presumably refers to the divine attribute of love, but in practice means one does not criticise, or withdraw support from, those who behave badly. These generalised doctrines are in direct contradiction to other and more comprehensive teachings e.g., experiential Sufism, which postulates, for instance, that a functioning teacher is absolutely indispensable.

When I later read Eileen Caddy's autobiography, *Flight into Freedom*,* then newly published, I understood the simplistic nature of her comments. She had been involved with the Moral Rearmament movement throughout the many years of her first marriage and was saturated in their tenets and concepts, and she had also been extremely open to the convictions of Peter Caddy with whom she was in frequent contact at that time – it was quite obvious she had absorbed the "tuition" he had received through various mediumistic channels for a lengthy period before her own "guidance" became manifest at the age of thirty-five. Moral Rearmament is a cult that relies heavily on indoctrination. It emphasises man's ability to change himself and his life by listening to the "God within," the result of which is then written down and the "guidance" followed. Great stress is placed on sharing one's guidance and on confessing one's sins and helping others to recognise and accept their own shortcomings. The cult embraces all creeds and denominations.

Eileen Caddy states in her book that she was not attracted to Moral Rearmament and went along with it to keep her husband happy (page 16). She participated in the movement's "quiet times" when everyone sat to listen inwardly and then wrote down what they

**Flight into Freedom* by Eileen Caddy and Liza Hollingshead. (Shaftesbury: Element Books Ltd, 1988).

"heard." She says with disarming honesty that she did not ever receive guidance on these occasions and only pretended to do so, writing down whatever first came into her head.

This raises a query concerning her later guidance, received in exactly the same manner, and the basis of the beliefs she established for the Findhorn Community through her "inner directives," beliefs that endure to this day, and which are uncommonly akin to those used in Moral Rearmament. One cannot therefore readily dismiss the possibility that her subconscious mind has represented the concepts of Moral Rearmament in the form of her "guidance" when fate appeared to decree it. The first time she registered the "inner voice" was at a crisis point soon after she deserted her husband to live with Peter Caddy, when she discovered to her great shock that this would cost her all future contact with the five children she had left behind. As Peter was still married to Sheena, the woman he at that time regarded as his spiritual teacher, she must have felt absolutely desperate (pages 26–28). In this fraught situation, when sitting desolately in a sanctuary in Glastonbury, she heard a voice in her head, and on this fragile testimony Peter and Sheena were both convinced that Eileen had heard the voice of God. Eileen herself was unsure of her own experience, and extremely doubtful as to its origin (page 29).

Considerable information is given about Sheena in *Flight into Freedom*, including her bizarre methods of training Eileen to respond to inner directives. This "tuition" was required of her by Peter, who accepted without query whatever Sheena decreed. As a consequence, Eileen became virtually a maidservant to this difficult, ill-humoured lady, whose obsessive behaviour, graphically described, conveys nothing of the essence of a genuine guide – indeed, Eileen asserts that she obeyed Sheena simply through fear and a desire to please Peter, and later, because she was afraid of losing him to Sheena's whim. On page 34, she relates how she mentally rejected this woman as her teacher and actually *hated* her, a highly questionable basis for spiritual tuition.

She details how at one time she became so overwrought through the mental conflict engendered by her own resistence to her obligatory dependence on Sheena, that her right arm became paralysed for over a week (page 35). There are several references to psychosomatic side effects in the book, which cause one to wonder to how great an extent the pressures placed upon her by both Peter and Sheena contributed to what she actually did produce as "guidance from God" during her enforced three-times-daily meditations. A point worthy of note is that Sheena's teaching was literally the same as certain tenets later promoted as Eileen's "guidance." This doubtless

made it wholly acceptable to Peter, who believed strongly at that time in Sheena's infallibility, even to the extent of permitting her abduction of his and Eileen's first child – a very dubious episode. Equally disconcerting is the information given on pages 82–84, which brings into question far more than Sheena's authenticity, dealing as it does with the matter of her eventual rejection by Eileen and Peter, and her desolate death.

On page 84 also, Eileen speaks of her early days at Findhorn, and of the "visions, light, colours" and "level of purity" that she experienced in her prolonged meditations. She adds, "Of course, I had my doubts," and that she wondered if everything she was experiencing on these "inner planes" was simply her imagination. I found this comment quite extraordinary. My personal experience is that the deepening of insight brings commensurate certitude through its intrinsic nature. Continually, Eileen was counselled by her "inner voice" to have faith, as she could not readily believe that which her own hand transcribed.

The account of Eileen's protracted meditations and their uncomfortable settings is impressive, as is the carefully worded guidance which undoubtedly contains elements of truth. But it must be remembered that the contemplative life is common to all religious bodies, of whatever faith, and is the standard hallmark of every sincere aspirant, a hallmark which does not qualify them as God's personal and infallible mouthpiece.

Eileen records that in 1963 she studied the lectures on positive thinking given to Peter by his "first spiritual teacher" (unnamed). This study she consolidated by putting into practice the recommended affirmations (pages 91–93), and it is this exercise that she has continuously taught ever since.

The latter part of the book is principally concerned with the break-up of Eileen's marital relationship with Peter and her visions of their ultimate reunion. At the time the book closes, he is on the point of separating from his young wife and child, and perhaps Eileen hoped he would come back to her. In actual fact, he married someone else. The autobiography concludes with the dream-vision of Peter and Eileen crowned King and Queen with important work to do that they must do together.

Anyone tempted to believe unreservedly in the guidance of Peter and Eileen Caddy should first read very closely the above-mentioned book.

It is now widely known through military research into methods of indoctrination that affirmations are a prime technique for use in conditioning the mind, and that any belief structure can by this means be changed for another under suitable conditions. Thus one

can fully believe in all sincerity that one is a Christ-filled being and manifesting one's Christhood at every conceivable opportunity (as I have heard several people claim), when in fact one is simply deluded, and as full of resentment, jealousy, pride and hostility as anyone else.

During my stay at Findhorn, Peter Caddy returned for a visit with his new wife, Renate, bringing with them her white robed Indian Guru and a bevy of sari-clad Eastern and Western devotees. A large meeting was held in the Universal Hall (at the Park) to greet them, at Peter's request. Eileen was not present.

It was apparent now that all Peter's former beliefs had given place to devotional attitudes and the acceptance of a teacher (who spoke no English) – a stark rejection of the assertions made by Eileen. This must have created a potentially embarrassing situation for the Foundation as a whole, especially as they were expected to accommodate this large body of people for two days at the Community's expense, and listen to a lengthy discourse on generalised Indian philosophy given by an elderly pundit (not the Guru) through an interpreter, interspersed with emotive responses of "Jai, Jai, Jai!" from the devotees. It struck an incongruous note, to say the least. The pundit asserted, on his Guru's authority, that to gain enlightenment one had only to read through the whole of the Vedas.

I met Eileen Caddy again before I left at the end of my six months of intermittent contact with the community. This came about through the denigratory treatment of myself by the Director and Trustee earlier referred to, Craig Gibsone, whose two week course on "Community, Culture and Spiritual Practice" I was attending. An interview, arranged at my request between the three of us, was intended to get to the roots of this denigration and to ultimately prove conciliatory. Eileen, however, was not disposed to hear anything adverse regarding the unethical attitudes and sheer bad behaviour of Findhorn members, especially this one, who was obviously a favourite and also the esteemed Director. She was unwilling to give me a fair hearing, and was solely intent on justifying what had been done.

"Your timing is *all wrong*," she said firmly, referring to my brief description of what I had seen when, along with the rest of the group on this course, I was asked to verbalise my perceptions after the introductory meditation. It was apparently quite in order for people to relate insights personal to themselves, but to make a statement on what one has seen in relation to the group as a unit was "simply not done." And to comment on the general level of fatigue amongst those present was absolutely unpardonable, despite the fact that the course brochure had stressed that everyone should come refreshed. I had not learned until later that a number of persons had joined the course

immediately following their "Experience week" in states of complete exhaustion. One even dropped out within a few days, being too emotionally shattered to continue. The condition of these participants suffering effects from the excessive use of techniques had naturally depleted the rest, and was tolerated presumably because their attendance was financially productive to the Foundation – as it was certainly not productive to anyone else. Eileen said my lesson in being there was *to learn to be silent* and *not* to talk of what I could "see," even if asked. *She herself* had had to learn to do this. My mention of the fact that I had come on an inner directive to share certain insights was brushed aside, as was my reference to my repeated requests to become a member. There was also the matter of my rejected books, refused inclusion in the very large range for sale in the bookshop despite offers of a massive discount or "Sale or Return." She quickly glossed over the whole of this. The problem was *mine*; the fault was *in me* and the way in which I presented myself. I should learn the lessons these "setbacks" brought me, be silent and "turn inwards" to receive guidance.

So I was silent and said nothing more, and continued to remain silent during her talk to the course group that evening in which she spoke of the importance of reading her autobiography if one wished to know how she had arrived where she was. I was one of the very few present who had troubled to purchase and read it, and she was naturally disappointed that others had not availed themselves of this book in advance. Perhaps needless to say, she had not read my own autobiography, though this had been sent to her with a covering letter some months earlier. I had also sent copies to other core group (or staff) members as a preliminary means of introduction and of giving my credentials. These, too, were unread; indeed had been deemed "unreadable" according to Craig Gibsone, who had chosen to humiliate me publicly as often as he could. In my own defence, I must make clear that *none* of the content of *The Destiny Challenge* was imparted to any single one of them. Nor did I press upon them anything at any time subsequent to these totally ignored copies.

I did not attend the last session of the fortnight, feeling too upset to do so. Others had inevitably been influenced by the person in charge, and the weight of Eileen's support gave added credence to all he (Craig Gibsone) had said. Instead, I walked along the coastal road to Findhorn village with the young male student, Stefan, who had accompanied me on the course, and who throughout had acted with commendable restraint at my request. When we were nearly there, he suddenly said he felt unaccountably afraid – his solar plexus was assailed by fear and he did not know why. Minutes later

I began to feel faint and had to sit down. About half an hour passed before I was able to set off again.

On our way back we walked into the course contingent as they left Cullerne House (where the session was held) to return to their chalets in the Park. They seemed subdued and I felt they avoided us. The young German sharing the chalet in which we were staying told us that a ceremony had been held in our absence – they called it a "Fishbowl." Three cushions had been placed in the centre of a circle, one representing myself, a second representing Stefan (the CRC student), and the third for individual members of the group to take turns to sit on and address one or the other of us as if we were there. Our informant told us that this was a very emotive occasion about which he felt very unhappy, and in which he had declined to participate. He said that some persons had expressed much anger and hostility, some had said "very nice things" about us, while others cried for reasons he did not know. Shortly afterwards we were visited by a rather worried member of the Foundation who had co-focalised this event, and who said she hoped, in view of the probable language difficulties with our German friend, that we had not "misunderstood" what had happened and thought they had practised "Voodoo or something" on us in our absence. The reason she gave for this extreme exercise was the need to release the unresolved emotions evoked during the course through the tensions arising between its leader (Craig Gibsone) and myself. As she had only been present during the two latter sessions, she was unaware of the openly hostile attitude exhibited by Craig Gibsone whenever I made a comment, as we were all in turn asked to do several times daily. Many of my comments, always mildly expressed, enquired into the basis of what was taught or into the actual effects of the many techniques and exercises we were given. These queries were perfectly legitimate, and others made them too, though not necessarily from the standpoint of insight. Although nobody supported me in public, a minority of those present were uneasily aware of the possible truth of what I posited. But others, as I knew by their thinly disguised antagonism, were subliminally conscious that what they themselves taught (for many of them were New Age teachers), and what they were busily appropriating from the course, was in no way productive of genuine growth. It was the course leader's inability to give adequate answers which created the tensions. Craig would fall back on, "*This* is the way we do things at Findhorn," or quote a teacher who had recently visited the Foundation and whose fundamental knowledge, in my view, was as deficient as his own.

Throughout the chalet conversation I felt extremely unwell, and when the visitor left I went straight to bed, unable to do anything

else. I could not have attended the end-of-course festivities even had the climate amongst the group been different. The return home the next morning was acute misery, and I deliberately avoided the above-named man who had been in charge of the group and was thus responsible for what had occurred. It took sixteen hours to get back to my home and I was ill all the way, much to the concern of my companion, without whose help I would not have been able to complete the journey. I collapsed into bed at its end feeling sick and utterly spent. I was very unwell for the whole of the next three weeks until whatever invaded my system had passed out of it.

Soon after my return I wrote a strong letter to Craig Gibsone in his official capacity as Director of the Foundation, as did my associate. I stated my conclusion that what he had instigated was the equivalent of a ceremony used in forms of voodoo to bring about certain injurious effects, and that although I was not inferring that it had been deliberately used in this context, ignorance of what was done did not unfortunately alter the result.* To centralise the energies of a large group of people (twenty-five, I believe) on symbols representative of persons not present is a highly potent practice, for the released subliminal impulses of those focussing their attention in this manner can readily reach the unsuspecting and unguarded subconscious (and aura) of the unfortunate focal points. I also reminded him that I had been well aware of the negative attitudes of several course participants towards myself throughout the fortnight, attitudes in no sense curbed by the way he had dealt with me publicly. He had given ground to these largely unexpressed hostilities and the "Fishbowl" episode permitted their full externalisation, whether verbalised or not. Neither my associate or myself had been consulted or informed on the matter of our representation and involvement in this ritualistic practice, and we were both shocked by the virulence of its consequence.

Several letters were exchanged as a result of these protests, but included in the responses was no hint of an apology, nor indeed any reference to the "Fishbowl" incident at all. The only suggestion of awareness of the implications was the facesaving proposal (for it would not *do* to have it said they had refused to listen to a genuine experience) that I return for three days to discuss my "vision" at the

*This type of "therapy," so carelessly bandied around, can be taken out of its original context and gravely misused by opportunists, as is demonstrated by the following newspaper paragraph (from *Today*, dated May 31st 1990, under the heading of *Take it out on a doll*):
"LONDON: Executives who suffer stress at work can buy toy dolls on which to vent their frustrations. The 15-inch figures, costing £14.99, are already a hit in America. They come in five models – referee, TV hog, office boss, traffic warden and golfer – and have heads, arms and legs which rip off with a satisfying tearing noise."

Foundation's expense, for which purpose they would spare me one afternoon, and thus ensure that I did not take the "Fishbowl" matter further. This I declined to do, as the Director also made clear that he considered it "unproductive" to enter into discussion of what had happened during my recent stay, or of what I had "perceived taking place" during his course. Least of all, presumably, would it have been productive to discuss my observations over the entire six month period of contact. The dozen or so letters I sent to other Foundation members, all of whom held staff positions, and one of whom was a Trustee, received no reply at all.

I appealed separately to Carol Riddell, one of the resident psychics at the Foundation, considered by many to be the best, and at that time about to be made (according to Craig Gibsone) a full-time and salaried Educator, and thus a member of the newly created faculty. I sent her copies of the full correspondence concerning this matter, and also some autobiographical material and several excerpts from my other-dimensional experience. Her response, dated October 16th 1988, contained the following:

". . . I cannot believe that you have ever really grasped what we are about here, and because of this, all the miscommunication and unhappiness has developed . . . I see what happened to you in Findhorn as entirely your own creation, your own message to yourself to show you what in you needs to change so you can get nearer to your own Essence and be less restricted by your physical and psychological problems. It is your teaching for yourself, created by you for you . . . Without learning these lessons, you cannot approach enlightenment, even though you may have powerful mystical experiences and visions . . . The small exercise performed at the close of the workshop has nothing to do with Voodoo. It is a standard and common exercise of Gestalt Psychology, which enables people to experience and express their feelings symbolically without hurting others. The way you interpret the exercise is the cause of your distress, not the exercise itself . . . We had plenty of experiences with 'psychics' and 'sensitives' in the seventies, and they were almost all disruptive and showed us that these things . . . are not to be played with by undeveloped personalities, except at high cost . . . I might venture to add that I was fascinated to read in the appendix to 'Beloved Executioner' of your troubles with the Meher Baba devotees. I have an uncanny feeling that you are creating a similar teaching for yourself at Findhorn. My presumptuous suggestion is that you forget about blaming others . . . and notice that you have created the whole thing as a teaching for yourself. The question is, can you learn the lesson . . . But I am beginning to preach. Anyway, Findhorn is a Divinely inspired institution to prepare people to be

able to live harmoniously in a spiritually based age that is in process of being enacted. Important for us is how people relate to other people, and how these relations demonstrate to them what they need to change in themselves."

The validity and usefulness of these comments must be left to the judgement of those who have actually *read* the book *Beloved Executioner* and are not simply mounting defensive measures to protect their place in life rather than acknowledge the truth of any given situation. There is also the relevant fact that neither my companion or myself was aware of the "Fishbowl" exercise at the time we experienced its effect, and I was ill for *three weeks* as an aftermath.

I should perhaps clarify that the other victim of the "Fishbowl" incident had strong feelings on this issue, and expressed these in his own letters to Craig Gibsone. He did not mind being considered an "undeveloped personality" as Carol Riddell's letter implied, never having claimed any development – though it was not personality that he wished to develop, contrary to the trend of the Foundation. But Stefan did object to the fact that the person who made this accusation, implying clear superiority, had undergone a sex change before taking up residence at the Foundation. Carol Riddell was originally a male, with a degree in sociology, and formerly a lecturer in that subject at a university. Stefan reacted as many other males would do in this situation and in face of such sweeping justification for personal ill-feeling, and was not prepared to accept the rulings of a transexual follower of Satya Sai Baba, the contemporary Indian Guru. He pointed out that Carol Riddell was in general esteemed at the Foundation because of her academic credentials, which Stefan was not willing to regard as authoritative in this matter. He did not feel compelled to defer to her popular "Breaking in" workshops in Germany, and nor her reputation as a clairvoyant, which he felt was invalidated by her apparent ignorance of a voodoo event, and also by the content of her letter. He similarly raised philosophical objections to her activities of "channelling," appended to the field of therapy and counselling, in which she was specifically believed to "channel" Satya Sai Baba, who had gained fame by declaring himself to be the reincarnation of Hazrat Sai Baba of Shirdi. I should add that Carol Riddell was more articulate than most of the other Findhorn members, and in general a gentle person who had formerly been consistently friendly towards me – one of the very few staff members to have shown such a disposition. Sadly, she appeared to consider that I had encouraged Stefan to comment on her changed gender – in fact, it was the reverse, I had cautioned him against it – and she angrily returned my books and papers to Stefan direct, without as much as a note. Apparently she was above learning lessons.

The vested interests of certain individuals who would not enjoy so comfortable a lifestyle (nor such status) outside the Foundation, unfortunately tend to blunt their willingness to acknowledge things they do not feel happy about. Several members who agreed with honesty to points made by me in personal conversations became silent on these issues when their open agreement was vital, and this could only be because they feared to step out of line. Perhaps Carol Riddell was one of them, for the stance she took during a private talk at the Park was quite different to that in her letter. This may be a very human attitude, but it does not betoken spiritual integrity.

At this point, although I was aware that the matter was unfinished, I withdrew entirely from the Findhorn Foundation, being fully occupied with other things. The previous autumn CRC had mounted two seminars, one at Potters Bar for a privately invited audience of Janice's contacts, a function that was very well attended, and a second which took place at Wolfson College, Cambridge. Owing to my activities in Scotland there had been very few group meetings, and the accent was now on groupwork. The "remnant" students referred to earlier worked steadily throughout the winter, and in late spring undertook a series of special projects, the principal one taking place in Dorset. At the end of April, I knew it was time to reopen my connection with the Foundation, and with this in mind wrote several letters and arranged an interview with a staff member whom I knew quite well. As a result of this I spent a further week at Cluny Hill College, and during this period found a delightful and unusually spacious cottage to rent in Findhorn village, which I arranged to take as soon as it was available. This transpired to be at the end of August, 1989.

* * *

In the meantime, I had talked to Craig Gibsone, the Director, and had smoothed over our problems of the previous year. He seemed disposed to be friendly and invited me to dinner at the Community Centre in the Park. He appeared surprised at my move to Findhorn village, which he could not entirely ignore. It was agreed that we should "start again" with goodwill on both sides.

I should add here that during this reconciliation, I was obliged to express a suitable deference to the views of the Director. It was actually a rather one-sided reconciliation.* He would not alter the former "blacklisting" of myself by the focalisers whose ability I had formerly questioned in situations of crisis. They had blocked me

*There was no interest at all in my "vision," which was not again mentioned. Nor was there the slightest apology for the "Fishbowl" incident.

totally from entering the phase known as Student Membership, normally open to all applicants who paid for courses as I had done. (I now had the money to pay for student membership, but this made no difference in my case). They thus ensured that I could not become a Full Member, and therefore on an official par with them. I should here explain that it was normally possible to become a Full Member of the Foundation after two years (a period later reduced to eighteen months). This Student Membership alone granted the eventual status of a staff focaliser, as the most elite category of resident Full members were known. It is therefore relevant to know what Student Membership entailed.

Student members were not on a course of study such as that conducted in CRC. Student members read the books of Eileen Caddy, considered an ultimate authority in the textual sphere, and also attended various talks and workshops given by Full Members and occasionally visiting teachers. Apart from that, they participated in the general daily routine of the residents, such as working in the grounds or in the kitchen. A misleading impression of this form of study is actually given if one thinks in terms of a studious routine. I believe that this was one of the major difficulties I encountered – various people were not well educated in the subjects I occasionally referred to. A persistent view of the Foundation members was that Cluny Hill College was a College of Spiritual Education, since that is how they defined therapy.

The Student Membership phase was the sole basis of "staff competence," there being no other diploma or graduation pertaining to status. For convenience, I will hereafter refer to resident members as distinct from Associates, the latter being the only option open to me in this organisation. I did take the opportunity of becoming an Associate, making a due payment, a privilege which was not denied me, probably because this category had a low status. As an Associate, I was now part of the "village" or "open community" attached to the Foundation, though not resident in it. This "village" was conceived as comprising those affiliates living in the local area, who in the publicity write-ups tended very much to be portrayed as part of the democratic community of the Foundation. In practice, I found that many Associates were very dissatisfied with the inferior status accorded them by the staff of "focalisers" as the elite were generally called. There did not seem to be any truly democratic principle in operation, but I refrained from making any further comments on such controversial points. Thereafter I was very careful not to express any criticisms at all of what went on, in deference to the relevant prohibitions – and the reader should bear this fact closely in mind in what follows. I visited the Foundation very frequently, both

at the Park and at Cluny Hill College, and observed events very closely.

The Director did not claim the role of a therapist or healer. Mr. Gibsone did sometimes conduct courses on allied themes however, and in general the mere fact that he had been resident at the Foundation for the greater part of twenty years was considered proof that he knew all there was to know about how to run a spiritual community, which was a descriptive term frequently applied to the Foundation. Most of the other focalisers had not been resident for more than a few years, and six years was considered a long term commitment. A grievance of some Associates was that many resident members left after a short working period for more lucrative vocations in other parts of the world, a fact not convincing everyone that maximum spirituality was actually being demonstrated.

Although I was denied membership, or, more accurately, was "blocked" before even taking the pre-membership programme known as "orientation," numerous others gained admission who, in my view, were in no sense serious aspirants. Many of them had recognised the "escape route" from mundane life that membership could represent, and took this route accordingly.

Several more serious and querying individuals broke away from this process before completing the orientation programme, or immediately afterwards. One young woman in her early thirties who had spent some years (she told me) idealising the Foundation from afar, was so distressed by the harsh assessment of her personal characteristics by an over-forthright focaliser,* that she fled in a state of near-hysteria and had to be sought out and coaxed back before leaving in a more normal manner. The forthright lady did not even receive a rebuke, being a long standing member with considerable authority, though, I regret to say, little intuitive perception as far as the young woman orientee was concerned.

One factor that grieved me greatly was the eager and open enthusiasm of some of the L.C.G's (Living in Community Guests) and Student Members, who accepted without question the training given them, regarding it as developmental and spiritually transformative. After a short period of attending intensive programmes and courses, they were already too wrongly imprinted to pay heed to any voice other than the Foundation's, meaning whoever was sanctioned by the Foundation to promote workshops or internal education for orientees and new members. I was acutely aware that if these same applicants had been exposed to sound tuition, the whole prognosis for them would have been different, and they would have actually had a chance to *grow*.

*one who did not practise the non-judgmentalism that she preached.

By the date of my removal to Scotland, five of my students had taken the obligatory Experience week at Cluny Hill College, and three of them remained in the area and worked in the College kitchen, at Cullerne House gardens, and on Park maintenance respectively. These students comprised an artist, a former Company Secretary, and an actor/writer (one female and two males). The eldest was thirty-five years old. Later, two of the older CRC members joined us (Joan and Janice), and took cottages in the vicinity. In this climate of renewed effort and Associate affiliation, I hoped to establish what I had originally come for. It was agreed that I could give some talks on the Foundation's premises (an option open to all Associates), providing these were confined to the winter period when all the rooms were not being used. And here I ran into an immediate difficulty, for although I could use the noticeboards to advertise what I proposed, no members chose to attend my first talk. All those expressing interest were simply visitors "passing through," which made serious work impossible.

It was also apparent that the "goodwill" of many resident members, and the Director himself, was only skin deep – I could not be prevented from becoming an Associate, but whatever I tried to do could be ignored. The talk was called *"Developing a new organ of consciousness: the key to other-dimensional experience."*

I was told by a non-staff member that Education Branch was invested with control of Internal Education, meaning the education of Student members during the autumn and winter period. It seemed that this Branch was having difficulties in finding something to offer for Student members. So I wrote to Education Branch and proffered my services, entirely free of charge both to them and to Student members. I outlined what I had done in Cambridge, and proposed to re-run this long-standing course, with suitable modifications. My letter read as follows:

Dear Eric Franciscus, November 7th 1989.

I am writing to ask you if Education Branch would be interested in accepting my services for Internal Education purposes. I have only recently discovered the intricacies of the Foundation's system, and believe I have approached the wrong person – I asked Craig about setting up courses and he very kindly offered me the use of a room and a noticeboard, but I now realise that the Ed. Branch exists for this purpose and that you are in charge of it, hence this letter.

I would like to offer a series of talks and/or an ongoing course. Suggested subjects for the talks are:

'Modes of cognition possible to man: the *kundalini* experience.'

'Contemporary Sufism: a precise developmental system.'

'The Feminine principle in Man and Woman.'
'Psychological effects of interior growth.'
'Experiential techniques: states and stages of evolving consciousness.'
'The Destiny Challenge: are we ready for it?'

The coursework pertains to studies and experiential work concerned with inner development. Some of the subjects covered are as follows:

The nature of Sufi studies. The use of teaching stories. Experiential teaching. The study of positive and negative energies. Teacher/pupil interactions. Developmental impulses. Hidden karmic elements. The process of interior growth. Higher ranges of experience. Physicalisation and practical work.

Requirements for tuition. The Sufi Guide. Basic studies. Preparatory exposure to work impulses and stimuli. Individual prescriptions. Levels of commitment. Objectivity and discrimination. Balancing intellect and emotion. Activation of higher modes of consciousness.

Evolutionary possibilities. The inherent potential in man. The mechanism of growth. Evolving facilities – E.S.P., clairvoyance, seership, direct perception, extra-dimensional experience.

The Sacred Journey. Christian mysticism. An equation of the soul's journey with episodes in the life of Christ. States and stages of the Sufi Way. The heart experience. Crossing the abyss; the dark night of the soul. Resurrection and Ascension.

Experiential studies. Self-observation and self-discipline. Internal dynamics – the discernment of psychological blocks. Effects of crystallised impressions. The requirements of given situations. Wrong use of developmental essence. The art of improvisation. Unconscious transits. The use of silence.

The above course was operative continuously in Cambridge, England, from February 1985 onwards with groups of from five to fourteen people. Some of the original students worked consistently until June 1989, when I finally closed down the then current work. They therefore found the subject matter and related activities of genuine interest.

I would be happy to promote similar work for the Foundation, without charge, or with a suggested charge of 50 pence per session per student.

My credentials are available if you wish to have them. I have incorporated the body of my experience in a published autobiography, and was a pupil of Meher Baba for six years before his death in 1969, and of another (named) teacher for many more. I now work on my own.

I have been clairvoyant since early childhood and have had many spontaneous and unsought experiences of an other-dimensional nature. In March 1977 I experienced a full *kundalini* awakening which profoundly affected my consciousness for fourteen days and produced the cosmic insights and certitude on which my subsequent work is based.

I have recently become an Associate of the Foundation.

I did not receive a reply, but heard, when I telephoned, that my proposal had been rejected in respect of Internal Education. There were no reasons given whatsoever. Eric Franciscus, incidentally, is a long-term devotee of Satya Sai Baba.

A fortnight after sending the letter, I found the following in the Education Branch minutes of November 14th as circulated in the internal magazine *Rainbow Bridge*:

> *Kate Thomas*: a letter was received from her with many interesting ideas for workshops. It was agreed that she should be offered facilities to rent our premises throughout the winter season and the workshops could be advertised in *Rainbow Bridge*. They *would not be part* of internal education. (italics mine).

The description of my course as "workshops" here demonstrated a common misunderstanding at the Foundation about other forms of education. Neither my talks or classes were ever "workshops," a term which implies an excitatory and emotive participation and attendant expectancy.

The official statement that my course could not form part of internal education was calculated to render that course virtually inoperative. The authorities concerned knew full well that their pronouncement would strongly deter any Student member from attending either my talks or classes, since resident members were identified with the official internal programme. It was one further confirmation of the discrimination about which Associates often complained. As one woman expressed it, they (the Associates) were treated as "second-class citizens," despite the sentiments about equality and democracy that were bandied around. Many Associates had not got the money to pay the advance for Student membership.

I enquired of Craig Gibsone why there existed such a strong barrier against an Associate participating in internal education. He replied that my work was considered "inappropriate," but he would say nothing more than this. He was not very friendly, an attitude I had long come to accept as commonplace in this establishment. There was definitely the factor of personal hostilities in my direction, unacknowledged hostilities that doubtless arose

because I had formerly tended to mildly point out that there was a difference between therapy and spirituality.

I decided not to proceed with my proposed course in view of the obstruction presented. It became evident that the attention of all Student members was firmly fixed upon what the elite staff chose to promote for internal education.

Three of the major official courses now selected were as follows:

(1) Reichian and Gestalt therapy. This centred upon three weekend workshops in which "tools from the work of Wilhelm Reich and Bioenergetics" were offered as a means of achieving "new ways of being." There were T'ai Chi dance exercises in accompaniment. The charge for this course was "Between £150 and £200." The course was conducted by Michael Lee, an American resident member who had been giving workshops throughout Britain for twelve years. He had trained with two colleagues of Wilhelm Reich in California. The Reichian ingredient inevitably emphasized the transformative power of sexuality.

(2) DMA Basic Course – Technologies for Creating. This was the literal title. It consisted of five sessions taken by a resident member. It represented a very popular, if extreme, version of the simplistic "creativity" vogue which had flooded the New Age therapy movement. One of the themes was "create your own future," and another which I heard about involved the explicit asserting of one's abilities to "co-create with God." The course involved "homework to do each day as you practice the various strategies for creating." This was not the type of homework which my students in CRC had been given.

(3) The Course in Miracles. This course revolved around the book *A Course in Miracles* associated with "New Age Christianity," a book which was very influential amongst resident members. This book was written by an American woman and combines a veneer of New Testament teaching with many supposedly profound statements which, in my view, are simply not true. A recurring theme of such courses was "forgiving rather than judging," tending to facilitate situations where legitimate criticism of any fault was stifled. Another favoured theme was "love ourselves and each other," though at the Foundation love was not always extended to Associates, let alone to common visitors. "The joy of the present moment" was another of these miracles, one capable of being interpreted very freely. *A Course in Miracles*, incidentally, is a "channelled" book, and hence not a single line of this text can be criticised save by those who project their guilt onto others (the definition of criticism in some sectors). This ensures "channelled" dogma at all costs, since heretics are stigmatized as unspiritual and as laden with guilt in any criticism they make

– a standard New Age doctrine promoted by healers who make a great deal of money out of such enterprises. It is impossible to elicit sane responses in such environments, where even the perpetration of tangible voodoo energies is considered to reside only in the guilty mind of the victim.

The dominant course transpired to be Holotropic Breathwork Therapy, to be mentioned further on in this chapter. Other courses and sessions were also on offer, all of these providing additional income for the resident members conducting them. Although the resident Full members were all housed and fed, with no heating or other bills, plus the bonus at that time of £79 per month for individual private use (now very substantially increased), most of them had some financial sideline – ranging from massage and reflexology to Tarot readings, clairvoyant sittings, and counselling for people recovering from former drug addiction and alcoholism. Some Full Members lived in their own comfortable chalets at the Park, but others were less fortunate and were restricted to caravans on the internal site, rooms at Cluny Hill College and elsewhere, and other less desirable accommodation. Student Members did not get the better accommodation, but I do not think that this was the main reason why many of them left the scene soon after completing Student Membership. There was often a feeling of dissatisfaction, though this was not officially admitted or condoned.

My first talk abovementioned had taught me something further about the "New Age" expectations drilled into visitors both before and after arriving at the Foundation. There were more than a dozen of them who turned up, but nearly all of them had a hopeless attitude in response to anything metaphysical. They had been conditioned by "teachers," therapists and counsellors into believing that there were "techniques" available which could give some kind of short-cut to happiness and psychic and/or occult powers. They were not actually interested in spirituality – with which they confused such distractions. One person kept asking, "What about techniques, then?" He clearly had a one-track mind, and I believe that anybody could have sold him anything they wanted if it sounded sufficiently bizarre. Another man was even more impatient. He pointedly asked, "What is *your* particular technique? Can you describe it? Let's get to the crux of it all." He gave the distinct impression of being in a hurry, as if he had an urgent engagement elsewhere and might decide to practice my "technique" for five minutes if he thought it sufficiently enticing. I had to disappoint them by keeping to the subject matter of my talk, in which the dangers presented by "techniques" were referred to. The amount of damage done to some of these visitors by so-called therapists was already incalculable.

My second talk yielded only six participants, one of whom was a resident staff member. There was a clear reason for this small number. The tangible hostility from the staff members (who included purported healers and therapists) had extended to the advertising leaflet for my talk. This leaflet was literally eclipsed by a pending men's group – the participants covered up my leaflet on the notice-board with their own poster. Perhaps it was a symbolic gesture of forgiveness in Crowleyan terms. Or perhaps it was even a cryptic expression of the guilt which they superimposed upon others. Only New Age therapists can give roseate interpretations of such ungentlemanly demonstrations of malice. When I salvaged my obscured leaflet only half an hour before the talk, I found that the word "Associate" had been boldly inscribed in black ink by some uninvited hand alongside my name. This was plainly intended as a stigma – the status of Associates was considered to be much lower than that of resident Members, and this had been a grievance of many Associates, who outnumbered the elite of this organization. This unrequested inscription was clearly intended to emphasise to all members and visitors that my talk was in no sense part of the prescribed official programme. It was by-passed accordingly.

About three hours before this event was due, I had a strong inner experience, about which I kept silent. The directive which had so far caused me to persist in taking the Foundation at its face value suddenly "switched off." This directive had remained constant for twenty-one months, during which period I had given the benefit of the doubt to the resident members. Now I knew that I could not persist in the face of the animosity that existed towards me from the elite. They could not endure anything that might conceivably constitute a rival teaching, perhaps more demanding than their own. I saw that I would instead work outside the Foundation, and would retain a link with the Forres area. I saw what was actually happening. Accordingly, I made no further effort to give talks or to initiate any course or groupwork within the Foundation. Mr. Gibsone was undoubtedly pleased that he had thwarted my intentions, and he did not lack supporters for his version of unconditional love.

The date of my second and last talk there was December 13th, 1989. I was in many ways relieved to remove myself from the antipathy of proud focalisers who were so intent upon suppressing any contrary message to their own. There had been abundant evidence of personal hostility from numerous staff members, who took refuge under the auspices of "unconditional love" without any fear of reprimand. They could not do any wrong. They were the staff, the teachers, the focalisers, those in authority, those who knew. They were progressive, they lived freely, not bound by old-fashioned rules

of traditional teachings, however contemporary these might be. *They* represented love, forgiveness, self-realization, higher-self exercises, and healing. To criticise them, however mildly or indirectly, was against the law.

The most striking case of this hostility, apart from the Director, was that of Loren Stewart, an American in his late forties. At first his response towards me was unusually positive. He and his ladyfriend Clare were the only Foundation members at the Park who bothered to read two of my books (including *Approach to Reality*, knowing that I was the author). They both passed a very favourable comment upon these books, and asked me to visit them. When I did so, both said that I sent their consciousness up inexplicably. Loren even admitted that he felt a deep respect for Meher Baba, and that he could not understand why Meher Baba's teaching had been so generally ignored at places like the Foundation (where Satya Sai Baba was the most favoured Eastern entity). Even more, he confessed to me a strong intuition that he would one day work with me – or had the opportunity to do so. But on the very next occasion that he saw me, he was very offhand, and it was clear that the reason for this change of attitude was because Craig Gibsone was talking against me. On subsequent occasions, Loren was unpleasantly aggressive where I was concerned.

This situation became aggravated with my students. Craig and Loren attempted to make Stefan's life at the Foundation as difficult as possible, for undeclared reasons. Stefan was also an Associate, but could only be induced to attend the Foundation at my request, where he worked daily on the grounds entirely free of charge. A more serious case was Joan, whom Loren tried to interrogate in a very bullying manner while she was working in the kitchen. He was here misusing his staff position as focaliser of the kitchen, and other guests also registered his aggressiveness. Joan was so alarmed by his emanation that she had to leave. He was a tall man, much bigger than she was. One might at the very least conclude that an environment saturated with Reichian and Neo-Reichian therapy does not reduce aggression but instead aggravates it. Such environments can produce savages, in contrast to any type of gentleman.

As far as I am aware, the members of the Foundation were not drug-users. But it was very disconcerting to hear Craig Gibsone, the esteemed Director, refer patronizingly to hard drugs like LSD as "recreation chemicals." I gathered that he had himself resorted to drugs at an earlier phase of his life, like so many of his generation. He once told me that he had been to India during the hippy boom and there lived a celibate life for a time, but on returning to the West his lifestyle had become much more permissive. He clearly thought that

this was an advance, not a retrogression, and there was a discernible note of contempt in his voice in referring to what he called "old-fashioned traditions" of the East, with which he associated me. "We're very progressive here at the Foundation," was his refrain in conversation with myself.

It was during the summer of 1988, while attending Craig Gibsone's two week course which concluded with the "Fishbowl" incident, that I first became acquainted with one of the new "progressive" developments. All the course participants were asked to assist one morning in mailing the new 1988/1989 Winter–Spring brochures of the Foundation programmes. I obtained one of these the night beforehand, and was dismayed to see in it an advertised course scheduled to occur at Newbold House, one of the Foundation's properties in Forres run by its members. This course was described as being for "mothers and daughters, sisters, wives, and lesbians, for Amazons, for ladies, for witches and princesses . . . for fathers and grandfathers, sons and brothers, for husbands and gay men, for knights and gentlemen, for kings and lumberjacks . . ."

One of the older staff members happened to be standing nearby when I read this, and I asked what he thought of it. He said that he had been much upset by the references to lesbians and "gay" men and had opposed the inclusion of this advert. But he had been outvoted by others and so there was nothing further he could do. I asked him if he realized what this meant – that it would open the door to certain types who had so far found no footing within the Foundation, at least in an overt sense, and who would eventually bring in AIDS. He looked distressed and said he hoped not – that this was Newbold and not Cluny, and nor the Park . . .

About Newbold House, of course, there was already some controversy. I was told that guests comparable to raw recruits were at liberty to participate in week or month long meditation retreats in which *all night meditations* were sometimes operative, some of which were followed by nude "sweatlodges," a combination capable of producing extreme effects to say the least.

The outcome of the above was that during the years 1989/1990, a number of lesbians, homosexuals and bi-sexuals joined the Findhorn Foundation as resident members, one consequence being that regularly on the noticeboards are now advertisements for "Gay Awareness" meetings listing these categories. I was present one morning when a new "Experience week" contingent booked in at Cluny Hill College, and I observed the reactions when some of them read the "gay" notice. This crude stress on sex and its variations in expression was not what the visitors expected to find in a place purportedly concerned with "bringing about a deeper sense of the

sacred in everyday life." Several books left in the library as "gifts," as I discovered when on cleaning shifts, left little doubt of the basic and pornographic interests of some of the new resident members of the Foundation.

It was in November 1989 that I learned what raised the highest enthusiasm amongst the Foundation's educationalists in general and Craig Gibsone in particular. It was a technique known as Holotropic Breathwork Therapy imported from the U.S.A. and promoted by the originator, Dr. Stanislav Grof.

Grof was formerly a prominent psychiatric researcher and is currently Scholar-in-Residence at the Esalen Institute of California. He is well known for his psychedelic research into non-ordinary states with the use of LSD, a controversial subject. Holotropic therapy is considered by enthusiasts as a major "breakthrough," being a non-pharmacological technique which provides a rapid entry into normally obscured areas of the psyche, though there are unrecognized dangers of both supernormal and subnormal aspect.

This technique had provoked considerable criticism in some quarters, but in other quarters its reception was euphoric. Here at last was a rapidly effective tool that gave unarguable results. What these results were had not exactly been ascertained, but it was affirmed that *some* people had produced mystical experiences akin to those of the greatest saints.

I listened with mingled horror and disbelief to the cassette tape obtained by a student (from Craig Gibsone) of Grof's recorded talk on the subject. On tape at least he was cautious enough to state that his research work was experimental, and that he, personally, did not know *why* certain syndromes occur, and did not know the possible short or long term consequences. Yet he also asserted that it was now undeniably possible for people to experience for themselves the same states as those ascribed to Jesus Christ in the New Testament, as well as a whole range of states that appeared to be the A–Z of the Creation process. This range of states included identification with rock, fish, plant and animal, likewise with supernatural forces, some of which were demonic. It also contained "replays" of past traumatic, life-threatening episodes and pre-life experiences (former incarnations), the latter frequently of a violent or excitatory nature. But the transcendental experiences were cosmic in type, and tended to arise when other blockages had been dealt with. There seemed to be a strong element of confusion with LSD experiences in all this.

To Craig Gibsone and others, holotropic therapy meant an "instant" way to achieve enlightenment, and he promoted a "trial run" for members and associates, a series of sessions conducted by guest American facilitators culminating their training periods with

Dr. Grof. It was difficult at first to ascertain exactly what happened at the sessions – the people involved were committed to secrecy in order to preserve each other's privacy, as what was initially "unlocked" in the individual psyche was often unpleasant and produced a variety of extreme reflex actions, among them vomiting and hysteria. One resident member who declined to join in the sessions, feeling the enforced "break in" to the psyche was somehow morally incorrect, positioned himself (he told me) where he could observe the participants as they left at the conclusion of the event. He was shocked by the disorientation of some of his friends, a disorientation that persisted for hours, days, and in some cases, weeks, afterwards. I asked several people why they found this situation acceptable and indeed compatible with spiritual development. The reply was that the soul was in control of its vehicles and would not permit lasting harm to come to them, that the soul brought forward into consciousness only what could be coped with – and the more traumatic the experience, the stronger the effects and the greater the cleansing and healing of the entire organism. This is what they had been told by the Director and the other focalisers. Yet Grof himself states: "It is important to realise that holotropic work is completely open-ended. It is best to think about it as an ongoing research project and psychological experiment." He also writes: "The task of the facilitator or therapist . . . is to support the experiential process with full trust in its healing nature, without trying to change it . . . even if he or she does not understand it at the moment."*

The fact is that the effects of this holotropic therapy are frequently extreme, and include projectile sickness, choking, screaming, violent displays of emotion, uninhibited expressions of sexual eroticism, and prolonged aftermaths of disturbed equilibrium and disorientation. The level of noise from the Universal Hall (at the Park) when the sessions were in process, primarily caused by screaming, was such that non-participants were obliged to suspend all work in that area and ban the presence of visitors. Letters were written to *Rainbow Bridge* (the internal magazine) on the subject and fully substantiated the above. The response from enthusiasts (who presumably did not suffer disorientation) was that the innermost self is in control, and the distressing release of energies normally locked in the subconscious is self-healing and therefore the technique is "safe." I have so far found no-one involved with this process (including Stanislav Grof) even willing to give a hearing (let alone credence) to the assertion that this method of forced entry into the psyche is a

*Stanislav Grof, *The Adventure of Self-Discovery* (State University of New York Press, 1988), pages 207 and 167. For a strong criticism of Grof's therapies, see Kevin Shepherd, *Meaning in Anthropos* (Cambridge: Anthropographia, 1991), pp. xxxiv ff.

perennial hazard, and that its short and long term effects on the finer vehicles of the soul are already known to authentic teachers, who do not therefore apply it to their students.

This holotropic breathwork so perturbed me that I made an appointment to see Eileen Caddy in order to learn her views on the matter. It was now late February 1990, and a further, and major, cycle of holotropic sessions was about to get under way. Eileen, to my surprise, agreed with my concern, which I had not anticipated as she had made no move to counter the breathwork or to convey her views to the membership of the Foundation. I suggested she should do this. She replied that she had received no "guidance" to do so – her guidance had long ago informed her that people must learn things for themselves. Her *personal* guidance had prevented her from participating, and she believed it could be dangerous for her to go against this – she had therefore made Craig Gibsone remove her name from the lists of those wishing to proceed (where he had placed it alongside his own), but other than this, she had no instruction. I pointed out that the presence of her name alone would of itself have sanctioned the breathwork, and that the situation surely required something further. I stressed that, although many persons had joined the Foundation for the wrong reasons (a point with which she concurred), there were others who were genuine seekers and had upheaved their lifestyles and committed themselves to the community through reading her books, and in trust of her directive. Surely she had a responsibility to these people and should make her views publicly known before a possible tragedy occurred? These people were not psychiatric patients and not in need of psychotherapy. This uncalled for interference in their psychic processes could cause much damage. Some could become seriously deranged, or even die . . . "*Perhaps that is what must happen*," she said, "to make them pay heed."

This attitude staggered me. I asked if she had acquainted Craig of her "guidance" when she withdrew her name from the list of participants. Her reply was yes. I then asked why he had not paid heed to this warning, or to *her* as the founder of the community, on whose guidance it had come into being. She said that he did not wish to listen and had opposed her before on other issues. When pressed she divulged that a number of staff members (including most of core group) had also ignored what she said in the past, so she no longer put forward her views. To me, this still evaded the issue of all the non-staff people who were unaware of these internal politics and looked to her guidance in trust. Eileen, however, was adamant, and asked me to "release" my concern to her, affirming that she would look into the matter with the American facilitator. I did so, as there

was nothing else I could do. I had no voice in this community save amongst my own small group of students.

Several days later, when the holotropic breathwork sessions were already in progress, Eileen for the first time telephoned me, and said she was "much happier" now about the situation as, through her intervention, Craig and the head facilitator (personally trained by Grof, and in charge of the sessions) had arranged a follow-up group for those who might need help on a "spiritual emergency" basis. I was unaware that any single member of the Foundation had the capacity to perceive the actual state of such crisis victims. Certainly, *not one* of the large group of American facilitators (trained by Grof) whom I had observed in the dining hall, however sincere they might be, had anything approaching this ability. Indeed, when such notice of this hastily arranged facility was prominently displayed, I saw to my sadness that the persons appointed could do no more than administer "counselling" or standard therapies.

Eileen never did make a public announcement, either spoken or written. Several people to whom I mentioned our conversation expressed astonishment, even disbelief, not having any idea that she was opposed to the breathwork therapy – in relation to which arrangements were now being made to make the Foundation a worldwide training centre for its promotion. The promotion included the bestowal of a certificate of qualification authorising the holder to use the technique both professionally and commercially. As succinctly expressed by a long-established staff member in *Rainbow Bridge* on 10th May 1990, " . . . the income out of the training programme itself is only one aspect. We also need to consider that we are qualifying people to give workshops in a realm which opens up to a deep inner spiritual knowing and which can provide a good shoulder season income on top of it, and that we can potentially earn substantial sums by hosting of workshops for the public in the future." (This was written by Ulla Sebastian, a follower of Satya Sai Baba).

This statement arose in response to several concerned protests from various areas of the community which were earlier voiced in the same internal magazine. One such protest was sent in by Stefan:

HOLOTROPIC BREATHING – AN OPEN LETTER

"Any active jogger in the community will no doubt be aware of what is termed 'runners high' – that moment of euphoria and wellbeing sometimes experienced after pushing the body to its limits, and beyond. The 'high' is due to cerebral hypoxia: the reduction of oxygen transmitted to the cortex of the brain. Very few objectively-minded persons encountering such a state would deem it 'spiritual,'

and quite rightly so. It is a physiological response of the brain triggered by bodily stress and oxygen deprivation. Endogenous opioid peptides, such as endorphines and enkephslins – morphinelike chemicals – are secreted by certain brain cells to alleviate the organism's distress.

"Holotropic Breathing induces an abnormal degree of cerebral hypoxia, which is known to give rise to seizure activity in the brain's limbic system. This will affect lobal areas of the brain associated with memory and emotion. The symptoms of limbic lobe agitation include: depersonalization, involuntary memory recall, intense emotion, euphoria, auditory and visual hallucinations. All of which are known to arise through prolonged Holotropic breathing.

"The use of rhythmic breathing, music, dance, ritual, hallucinogenics, narrative, emotional arousal, sex, and intense physical exertion etc, have been applied in one form or another throughout all Ages and ethnic cultures to induce altered states of consciousness. All legitimate Traditions warn against any practice employed in an *ad hoc* manner upon a random collection of people at differing stages of evolutionary growth, and needs. Such techniques will merely produce counterfeit experiences, and can be seriously damaging to the developmental potential of the participants.

"Stored impressions within the deep layers of the psyche, perhaps incarnational deposits, are linked to a spatiotemporal series of events, and act as connecting nodal points within a much larger design that outworks in the individual's karmic patterns. They are the means for further evolutionary growth. One cannot just 'explode' these impressions – which can be compared to genetic material – without radically altering the 'composition' of the individual, and affecting relationship alignments. Holotropic Breathing can interfere with structures of the psyche that have a radioactive potency, which if released out of personal evolutionary sequence can cause serious mutations on an interior level, mutations that will take lifetimes to eventually work out. I believe the more 'sensitive' in the community have already encountered the high level of toxic waste material that was discharged during the intensive breathing sessions. I can assure you, it was just the beginning, and it will be the collective community, children included, who will have to soak up any toxics further released." – Stefan C.

I also sent a letter to *Rainbow Bridge*, but the then-Editor, Jean Prince, returned it to me, having first passed it to Eileen Caddy in view of the content. Eileen declined its inclusion, and I had to amend the letter in order to make it acceptable. This of course meant the deletion of reference to Eileen. I quote now from the original:

"I would like to comment on a staff-member's response to the

concern expressed by various associates and members on the matter of Holotropic Breathwork Therapy. Firstly, Stanislav Grof himself, in his introductory cassette on the subject, says H.B.T. is an *experiment*, and that he, personally, does not know *why* certain syndromes occur or the possible short or long term consequences. In various written articles and talks he also makes plain the purely conjectural nature of his findings. Therefore, it seems to me he is not in a position to give certificates qualifying anyone at all to safely conduct another human being through this grossly over-extended Yogic technique.

"The only persons qualified to open-up the deepest interior of the human psyche are those who have already attained the faculty of perception (*not* to be confused with psychism or clairvoyance) by which means individual levels of evolution, and the intricate karmic processes requiring adjustment in order that another soul might attain completion, are perceived with clarity. A person with this capacity, which is invariably linked to other esoteric abilities, would *not need* to resort to this dangerous and misunderstood technique known as Holotropic Breathwork. I use the word 'dangerous' because although people may indeed have what they believe to be 'positive' experiences, they are ignorant (as, with all due respect, is Stanislav Grof) of what is actually being done to them – i.e. that the knots of impressions on which they depend for externalising experiences in their lives (frequently difficult, even painful ones, I agree) are being expended and released quite fruitlessly. The untimely release of these impressions in H.B.T. experiments in fact *denies* the later possibility of productive spiritual growth, which is engendered in the very process of overcoming (in a natural manner) the problems inherent in these (prematurely) nullified impressions. They (the impressions) are the fuel – the actual means of healthy progress. Interior development only arises from the mastery of the self in the midst of friction, and this is known to all legitimate teaching sources. The community's founder, Eileen Caddy, agreed this latter point without reservation when we discussed it privately, and cited the difficulties of her own life. She also told me she had been prevented by her personal guidance from participating in the H.B.T. sessions, and was not at all happy about them.

"By the same token as my earlier comments, any follow-up care is valueless in cases of serious disorientation or psychic disturbance if those in charge cannot *see* what has been done, nor have the *interiorly trained capacity* to correct it. The sad fact is, of course, that any damage on this level *cannot* be fully corrected – the actual life mechanism is being interfered with, and nobody with such functional perception as I have mentioned would involve themselves with these practices in the first place.

"I wrote to Dr. Grof on this subject during his stay at Minton

House, though he did not choose to give me the courtesy of a reply. What to him is an 'experiment' with theoretical (but financially lucrative) results, is *already* comprehensively charted, complete with every conceivable consequence, in the knowledge of authentic traditions, and is an open book to those with genuine inner vision.

With very great concern,
Kate Thomas."

The above letter, less its reference to Eileen Caddy, went into the May 23rd edition of *Rainbow Bridge*, and brought forth several responses. One was as follows:

"I would like to express my appreciation of Kate Thomas's article on Holotropic Breathwork. I have not experienced H.B. myself and actually am glad that I have not, and so am writing about what I have heard from others, about my own impressions and about my meeting with Lewis who led the last H.B. workshop.

"Delightful though Lewis is, I was deeply shocked to discover in our meeting that he himself, whilst leading the holotropic breathwork, is terrified of 'falling through the ice': in other words is terrified of what states this process could take him into. To have someone leading this process, the purpose of which, I understand, is to take one into transpersonal states, who is very frightened indeed of their own inner state, to me is alarming and highly irresponsible.

"I see no safety net whatsoever for people who need care following the breathwork sessions, and know that the Grofs (Stanislav and Christina) are putting all their energies into holotropic breathwork training programmes and none at all into creating Spiritual Emergence Network* Residential Centres . . . I am coming rapidly to the conclusion that Holotropic breathwork is a 'glamour' device, good for fast fame and fortune but not much else."

The lady who wrote this, Jane, signed herself as an Associate. I did not know her, and she knew nothing of my activities. In the same May 30th issue of *Rainbow Bridge* was an open letter to Craig Gibsone from a fellow senior staff-member. Alec Whittam clearly felt strongly over the issue of Holotropic Breathwork, and his letter referred solely to this. I quote it in full:

"I presume that all the written feedback you received (about H.B.) has been 'aired' in the *Rainbow Bridge*. By my count there was one in favour, five against, and one concerned and offering suggestions. I also see from the proposed schedule for 1991 that some kind of decision has been made to 'go ahead.'

"My gut feeling is that we are asking for trouble with this type of work. I question whether we know enough to be able to hold and

*Founded in 1980 by Christina Grof as an international organization providing support for individuals undergoing personal crises.

contain whatever is being released. It feels to me that this is highly focussed individual therapy which requires teachers who are, or should be, spiritual adepts.

"I question whether this type of workshop is compatible with our work/vision here. Remember David Spangler's comments on 'remembering'?

"As far as I am concerned my whole being screams NO . . . there is danger for you here. I do not know in any intellectual way why I have this reaction, but I must pay attention.

"So, as one of the 'leaders' of our Foundation I want to stand up and be counted. I cannot support the continuation of this work under the auspices of the Foundation."

The letter was signed and dated.

A third letter in *Rainbow Bridge* on May 30th was from the Director himself, and was obviously intent upon reassuring the fearful and expressing vexation with people like myself and Stefan. Here are several excerpts:

"I have been working with spiritual growth and awareness for the last 25 years and have done some very radical things. The Holotropic Breathwork, while being powerful and dynamic in giving the individual access to other levels of the self which are appropriate at the time, is very safe, loving and caring.

"Reading Stefan C's and Kate T's reflections, I see that what they fear in the breathwork are in fact the very things which make me want to do it – and that this centre (Findhorn Foundation) is one of loving transformation which works beyond the confines of their world view.

"Finally, this centre has something to add to the Holotropic work, as I feel that it is still developing and we can assist in its integration. Remember – there are many highly developed adepts and initiates living and working here. Love, Craig."

Stefan responded immediately to this letter, and sent his comments to *Rainbow Bridge*. The Editor refused publication of this document and sent it back, saying Stefan must ask Craig's permission first before she would include it. Stefan therefore sent a courtesy copy to Craig, and followed this with a copy of the Editor's request. There was no reply, and the paper in question did not get into print. I include here in full this suppressed document:

HOLOTROPIC BREATHWORK THERAPY

Re: Craig Gibsone's Comments

"My initial response to the Holotropic Breathwork Therapy 'survey' was prompted by Craig Gibsone's comments in RB that: 'The Foundation is seriously considering doing a three year training

programme.' By the word 'Foundation,' I had, it now seems, naively assumed this meant the collective community. I was wrong. In this instance the 'Foundation' equated to a rather small clique known as Education Branch. The 'survey' was in fact little more than a farce as the decision to go ahead had already been made without a consensus of opinion. It is quite apparent that the borderline between autonomy and dictatorship at departmental level is somewhat nebulous in the Foundation at present. There should, of course, have been an open forum debate to discuss the issue of Holotropic Breathwork before any further HB sessions are held, let alone incorporated as an ongoing programme for those few members whose personal ambition is to do the training.

"As to Craig's current letter to RB, which did not answer any of the points raised in either Kate Thomas's or my own letter:

"I do not doubt that Craig has done 'some very radical things' during the past 25 years of his 'seeking,' though this is no guarantee that 'spiritual growth and awareness' ensued. Nor is it a credential for adepthood. But then, Craig is not (at least as far as I am aware, and as he would doubtless agree) one of the 'highly developed adepts and initiates' living and working as Foundation members referred to in his letter. I would, however, be most interested to meet these 'highly developed adepts' amongst the membership. Perhaps one or more of them would like to step forward and declare themselves?

"I did once hear of a young Experience Week participant who thought her focaliser was a Cosmic Master, but the illusion was soon dispelled when the Master in question started telling risque jokes. (True story).

"Commenting on what he describes as 'Stefan C's and Kate T's reflections,' Craig goes on to state: 'I see that what they fear in the breathwork are in fact the very things which make me want to do it.' Let me refresh the memories of RB readers as to what some of these 'very things' are:

"Cerebral hypoxia leading to seizure activity in the brain's limbic system/Temporal lobe agitation/Bio-chemical intoxication/Release of incarnational impressions out of evolutionary sequence/'Tainted' impressional discharge wholly toxic to those who absorb it.

"These were but a few of the points raised, and which seem to make Craig 'want to do it.' But then, by his own admission, he likes to experiment with 'radical things.'

"Finally, Craig makes an unsubstantiated statement ('the confines of their world view'), implying that Kate Thomas and myself are suffering from limited perspectives. In reply I will do no more than to direct the reader's attention, and Craig Gibsone's (if he has the time to draw himself away from 'radical things'), to the book *Approach to*

Reality, by A.J. Peterson. Contained therein is a fragment (pages: 137–149) of Kate Thomas's extra-dimensional experience during a fourteen day *kundalini* activation occurring in 1977. This was the culmination of a 'traditional,' legitimate approach and training, and contained the mandate (not a paper certificate) for her current work." – Stefan C.

Stefan sent a further letter to *Rainbow Bridge*, and this time it was included (there being a new Editor) in the June 20th issue. In the meantime other persons had sent in their own comments, notably Andrew Murray, who supported H.B.T. to the hilt. But I will conclude this section on the breathwork with Stefan's letter, which is self-explanatory:

HOLOTROPIC BREATHWORK THERAPY – Just for the Record.

"There is a somewhat totemic assumption held amongst those who have made comments in favour of a Holotropic Breathwork programme in the Foundation: that persons who have expressed concern, or have spoken against this theoretical, experimental therapy, are projecting a 'personal fear.' This, of course, is an old cliché (based upon a generalized understanding of human psychology) much favoured in 'new age' (and totalitarian) circles whereby all criticism and objective observation is conveniently stereotyped as 'self-assertion' or 'projection' by those with a vested interest in implementing current policies and ideologies. However, strange as it may seem to some, there is such a thing as knowledge as opposed to 'personal fear.'

"Andrew's remarks: 'I am saddened by the narrowness of some of the criticism. And I think it is cheap innuendo (Jane and Kate) to associate economic success with corrupt motives,' are not justified. Many of the comments, especially those by Kate Thomas, could hardly be termed narrow. In fact, the depth of her remarks challenges the very 'core' of the Foundation and those alleged 'highly developed adepts and initiates' amongst the membership referred to by Craig. When economic success is at the expense of the developmental potential of 'seekers' and 'aspirants,' this is corruption of the worst kind. Of course, some persons in the Foundation seem fixated with money. Ulla reflects on the possible economic success of HB workshops which: 'can provide a good shoulder season income' . . . 'and that we can potentially earn substantial sums by hosting of workshops for the public in future.' Ulla, and those others who share her monetary vision and preoccupations ('I have spent 3½ years of psychoanalysis on money'), would do well to consider the real cost involved.

"The statement by Irene that: 'The subconscious never gives

anything to our conscious unless we are capable of dealing with it,' is pure fabrication. The annals of psychology bear witness to the contrary. In the case of Holotropic Breathwork, strata of the psyche are being forced open *before* the personality has evolved to a level able to cope with what *could* be released. It is illicit entry, a veritable rape of the soul. Fortunately, most persons *will not* gain access to the deeper layers of the psyche; some have yet to evolve such depths. A hard, yet verifiable statement. As for the so-called 'spiritual aspect' which the Foundation hopes to graft onto HB, this is merely a form of cargo-cult mentality. I do not consider a violation performed in a church is thereby 'improved and deepened.'

"My reply to Craig's comments were censored by RB. What I wrote was no more personal than his own remarks, though certainly more objective. I merely questioned his own unsubstantiated statements. A copy of the relevant 'offending' parts of my letter has been sent to Craig, who has the option to publish it. I realize that HB will be accepted by the Foundation; however, those that stand against the tide need not suffer the consequences, and there will be a price to pay." – Stefan C.

(Stefan's earlier suppressed letter was never printed. He had no further contact with the Foundation, having already ceased to visit it).

It should here be added that at this time Alec, the dissident staff member, retracted his remarks against Holotropic Breathwork after being pressurised to do so in a meeting of the Core Group which occurred in June. However, he noticeably would not attend any of the subsequent Holotropic sessions.

The Core Group was composed of staff members or focalisers, and included the Director and also Eileen Caddy, who wanted to be part of it. Alec later recounted to me the events of this rather tense meeting of authority figures. Only he and Eileen expressed disagreement with the decision to implement Holotropic Breathwork as an integral feature of the Foundation. But both of them gave in to the majority view expressed by the Director, who convinced them they were projecting their own "stuff" (meaning personal psychological reactions). Again Eileen did not mention her misgivings to a general Foundation audience unaware of the basic situation. Principles so often floundered in this organization. The official plan was to spread Holotropic Breathwork on an international scale, thus furthering Dr. Grof's own attempts to do this for over a decade through his own workshops in several countries.

Several staff members were followers of Satya Sai Baba. One of these devotees was a prominent member of Education Branch, while another gave "messages" in a Spiritualist fashion that were purportedly from Satya Sai Baba. This Guru's influence was a definite factor

within the Foundation; his teaching was not demanding or rigorous, and stressed "inner peace" in the individual, which made it quite popular in New Age ranks. Like Rajneesh, if in a less controversial manner, this Guru had exerted much influence upon the field of "therapy and counselling," certain writers stressing that he had been responsible for the development of their counselling techniques. Satya Sai Baba is a glorified therapist and counsellor, not a spiritual adept, and one day this might be better understood. He is the artificial namesake of a deceased Sufi, whose name he appropriated in order to gain fame in India. I never once voiced this perspective within the Foundation, and there was not any overt sectarian attitude on the part of the Satya Sai Baba devotees. It was the beliefs with which they were saturated that determined their attitudes in concurring with official decisions and strategies.

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, another therapist and counsellor, had likewise been an insidious influence at the Foundation for some years. A number of Rajneeshis had passed through the Foundation, and I met several of them there. One of these was disposed to be aggressive in discussing his guru's version of Sufism with me, since I *had* to be wrong. This man believed Rajneesh to be a Sufi, which is an utter impossibility in the real sense of that word, though I was careful not to say this. I found that a range of books by Rajneesh were on sale in the Foundation's bookshop. None of the members seemed to be aware of what had happened in Oregon several years earlier. I mildly queried the presence of these books on sale, but with predictable consequences of total indifference. These books were associated with therapy, the speciality of Rajneesh, and doubtless they were also commercial.

Undeniably a far stronger guiding influence upon the Foundation was Eileen Caddy, whose contradictory position in the internal politics passed largely unnoticed. Many people were under the mistaken impression that Craig Gibsone deferred to Eileen, though he seemed to follow no teacher save himself. She may have been one of the "initiates" referred to by the Director, but it is unlikely that he seriously considered her an "adept," since he stridently over-ruled her objections to Holotropic Breathwork in the Core Group meeting abovementioned. The indications are that Mr. Gibsone considered himself to be one of the "adepts," apparently very much in the Western tradition in view of his expressed contempt for Eastern traditional disciplines with their emphasis on morality.

The Director definitely held Dr. Grof in high regard, and tended to treat him as though he were an adept. I was able to observe Dr. Grof in the canteen during one of his visits to the Foundation, and it was evident that influential members deferred to his views. Dr. Grof had

been Scholar-in-Residence at the Esalen Institute since 1973, and hence his authority in that Institute was strongly in ascendancy. The American facilitators of Holotropic Breathwork who were sent to the Foundation by Dr. Grof certainly considered his utterances to be virtually infallible. I had a conversation with one of them, and could only elicit highly programmed replies equivalent to the unyielding and unarguable profundity of "Dr. Grof says," or, more familiarly, "*Stan* says." It was only under the stress induced by the actual "therapy" sessions of H.B. that one of these facilitators confessed his fears and uncertainties as to what might happen (as related above in Jane's letter).

One tended to be given the impression that nothing in Dr. Grof's vicinity could ever have gone wrong, not even remotely. It is therefore pertinent to remind that Stanislav Grof developed Holotropic Breathwork during the 1970's in collaboration with his wife Christina, a teacher of Hatha Yoga who was deeply influenced by Swami Muktananda, the so-called "Head of the Siddha Yoga lineage." Christina was Muktananda's student until his death in 1982. Muktananda had gained a large American following, but it did not become widely known until the very end of his life that this professedly celibate Yogi regularly had sexual relations with young female "disciples." Two of these young women even described their own relationships with him in terms of "molestation or even rape."* Other allegations include this Yogi's encouragement of terror tactics and financial deceits involving millions of dollars in Swiss bank accounts. The devotees who remained loyal to Muktananda took the attitude that anything he might have done was acceptable, since his actions as a transcendentally enlightened master were beyond the distinctions of good and evil.

I can personally see no real hope for the New Age movement unless and until it learns to be more critical and honest. Above all, it needs suitable education, not therapy or shallow counselling.

* * *

Some years previously, an acquaintance of David's had sent a copy of a book written by the latter for review in *One Earth*. This book was ignored, despite the fact that it represented a very spiritualized member of the Afghan tribes, and at a time when Afghanistan was under military attack from the Soviet army. Despite the fact also that books like those of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh were frequently

*D. Anthony, B. Ecker, and K. Wilber, eds., *Spiritual Choices: The Problem of Recognizing Authentic Paths to Inner Transformation* (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1987), p. 22.

reviewed with great favour in *One Earth*, a magazine which gave the distinct impression of being global in its relevance. This magazine was sometimes congratulated by its readers for the global incentive of creating "one earth."

At the outset of my stay at the Foundation in 1988, I had requested David to supply another copy of the ignored book, and he complied. This was submitted to Andrew Murray, the Editor of *One Earth*, along with three other books David had written, including the one concerning scientific matters – bearing in mind that the Foundation made much of its interests in ecology and avant garde science. Despite their different content, these books reaped exactly the same fate as my own – total obscurity in the Findhorn Foundation. They were not reviewed, and subsequently they could not even be located. Nobody appeared to know where they were. Certainly, nobody cared. Andrew Murray and the other editorial staff preferred books on therapy, and it was these that were primarily reviewed in *One Earth*.

David's published books at that date included a focus on Indian, Afghan, Iranian, Turkish, and Arab subjects. None of these ethnic elements were included in the resident membership of the Foundation, which was predominantly white American, insofar as I could ascertain. Stefan was incredulous that this sort of gesture could occur under the declared auspices of "One Earth" and the global sentiments that attached to this phrase.

When I told David of the outcome of this "experiment," he commented: "Ah, New Age censorship. Well, Professors in the universities of many countries have known for years that such organizations customarily ignore serious works of any kind. I merely gave this organization the chance to disprove establishment conclusions. It would seem that 'One Earth' applies in reality to the Western hemisphere plus a little T'ai Chi dancing and a few of the more outrageous Indian Gurus. My books are not of course important, I do fully concede. They merely serve sometimes, perhaps, to give indication of how much is omitted from various curricula. I had always imagined that Americans and Australians were broad-minded, but this would not seem to apply to the New Age sectors of these races. Apparently the British are not the only insularists."

At a later date, David himself moved to the Findhorn area, but in total anonymity insofar as the Foundation was concerned. He prohibited both myself and Stefan from mentioning him to anyone at the Foundation. The only person I was permitted to inform of this event, some weeks after his move, was Craig Gibsone. I was to state only: "My son has moved to this area." Craig vaguely remembered David's books being given in to his magazine staff, and said: "Oh

yes, he's some sort of writer, isn't he?" I replied in the affirmative, as vaguely as I could, which was not difficult in the prevailing atmosphere of the Foundation. "What's he like, then?" added the Director, with just a hint of Australian curiosity. "Oh, he's a little different from Stefan (whom Craig disliked), but rather English perhaps," keeping to the vague mood I had been asked to cultivate on this matter. "Oh," said the Director, with no further interest. It seemed quite clear that the new local resident was nobody of any importance. A rather obscure writer, probably an intellectual, that was all.

"Ah good, the introductions now over, I can get down to some work in a quiet environment," remarked David when I told him of the conversation. He never set foot in the Foundation, and nobody else there knew of his existence. He regarded the Foundation as an exoteric organization suffering from confused influences, and wished to remain unknown to that community.

The Foundation paid great deference to commercial celebrities – trendsetters in therapy and transpersonal psychology. Despite the lip service paid to scientific interests, these were actually in very low profile save for the transpersonal variety. This scarcity of the scientific element was thrown into acute relief during the autumn of 1989 when the staff members became alarmed at the low level of interest in a scheduled scientific conference which the Foundation was organizing on its premises. Until the last moment, it was feared that very few guests would attend. There seemed to be a strange lack of interest amongst subscribers, visitors, associates, and members. It was discovered that only a very few members of the Foundation were at all scientifically minded, and even fewer were competent to give a talk on a scientific subject to an internal audience. Mr. Gibsone was notably not one of them. The Conference was rather ambiguously entitled: The Beauty of Surprise (subtitled Science and Mystery in a Self-Creating Universe).

This caption arose from the rather naive interpretation of "chaos" theory (relating to physics) in vogue amongst the organizers. Their assumption was that a contrived, "unstructured" Conference (intended to be representative of "chaos") would, in some mysterious manner, model the natural emergent organising behaviour of a dissipative structure evading entropy. The general vagueness of the organisers tended to accentuate the indifferent and anti-scientific attitude evidenced by the community as a whole.

I asked David if he would like to attend. No, he said. Such events were not recognized in Cambridge, he added, where commercial enterprises, however well-intentioned, were not considered to be of scientific importance. Apart from anything else, he said further, he was not inclined to pay the fee, though he realized that the

Foundation probably had to pay the guest speakers for their eminent services. (He had never forgotten Professor Schaefer's financial exactitude).

Meanwhile, the Conference organisers grew desperate. They only had a small number of committed guests for the event, and interest required urgent acceleration on the home front. There were problems in physics, and only one member was able to give a convincing talk on Einstein and related matters (drawing heavily from a recently published book, and scarcely approaching Sergei's technical level). There were a few people who could muster knowledge of transpersonal psychology, but for a brief time at least, it dawned upon the staff that the field of professional psychology was somewhat larger than therapy and transpersonal interests. They were at a particular disadvantage with medicine, for instance, and the Director was rather peeved, I felt, to learn that one of my students had been a consultant for the World Health Organisation established by the United Nations, but who would not attend the Foundation because she considered that all the therapy was so unprofessional that both her conscience and principles would suffer if she did.

Stefan valiantly attempted to help fill the gap that was glaringly evident in the scientific output of the spiritual community. He himself had not been to university, and was a former Company Secretary. But during the last few years, and as a result of all his homework for CRC, his writing and grammar had very markedly improved. Added to this, he had been inspired by David's books and general attitude to adopt firm scientific criteria in matters of study, and had increasingly been reading scientific literature in addition to mystical literature. He now produced a paper on physics that was vastly in advance of average tendencies at the Foundation, and for a brief time, the Director softened towards him. Stefan offered to undertake, free of charge, a special magazine catering for scientific interests. Mr. Gibsone was so hard put to find scientific talent with which to greet the outside world, that he did actually agree to this proposal. Stefan allowed the Director a very generous, if rather unscientific, profile in this magazine by means of a taped interview, and also invited contributions on an egalitarian basis from the whole community, which drew an infinitesimal response – one member even suggesting that the magazine should contain such scientific information as to who was available in the area for babysitting. There was also a request for cartoons (from a transpersonal psychologist).

Stefan called his magazine *Confluence*. The Director and his staff clearly thought that this magazine would assist to give a scientific impression to the guests at the Conference in November, and it was planned to distribute the first issue amongst the guests and members.

Still the members showed very little interest, and Stefan's main helper was another of my students, Malcolm.

There was relief when the Conference at last gained the outside support that had originally been anticipated. When the event was over, Stefan's project lost favour with the elite, who expressed no further interest. They resisted the further operation of *Confluence*, snuffing out the alternative thinking to therapy and the transpersonal. Stefan was not able to get Number Two of his magazine into circulation, even though he was an Associate, having paid for this privilege fairly generously and working free of charge. He was too much of a sociologist for the Foundation tastes. Science was not commercial enough, and ecology was really only of interest to highly committed types, who were rather few in the stark light of day. The rest all wanted excitement and workshops, not to mention surprise. David once commented: "I dare say that they do not want spirituality any more than they want science, if the truth were known."

According to all reports, the above-mentioned Conference appeared to have been anything but scientific. Neither myself nor my students attended, although we all helped fill the extra work rotas (in return for which we received a meal for each session), but a full report by Andrew Murray was made available in the Spring 1990 issue of *One Earth* (Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 8ff). Judging by this it would seem that every stop in the therapy spectrum was pulled out in the "work groups" that largely comprised this Conference. In great evidence were the usual masculine/feminine issues which externalised in all-male and all-female groupings on the fourth day of the conference. The male group brought forth its fears of varying kinds, including those surrounding violence, failure, and sexual guilt . . . "Problems with power. Anger at ourselves and each other. Fear of growing old and unlovely . . . Along with the pain was also pride and joy in maleness, power and sexuality. We cried, laughed and snarled at each other." Later, they were joined by the women, who described their experiences of "disempowerment and exploitation." A woman described being raped. One woman began to "weep and moan, incoherent with pain and grief, huddled on the floor while others held her. The Hall was full of emotion – compassion, impatience, anger, fear . . . A man stepped into the group and offered himself, 'like Dionysus,' as a sacrifice . . . Gradually the process ran down to a stunned conclusion. People seemed relieved, but puzzled and unresolved." Extra to the curriculum was an all-night session: "This started out loud and raunchy with drumming and chanting and some wild dancing. It ran down towards 3.30 a.m. Its most notable after-effect was the discovery next morning by the women's barber shop group coming to rehearse, of a couple making love on the floor

of the music room." The male party to this event had behaved erratically throughout the gathering; he was quite obviously emotionally disturbed, but allowed to remain a participant. At one point he seriously alarmed a female speaker by approaching her and threatening her with a concrete building block during her address, and spent the week "demanding attention . . . and interrupting presentations . . . In this he was a true embodiment of chaos. People were tolerant and sought to nurture and integrate him. Some people (more often men) romanticised his clown role and obscured the distress that some women experienced . . . finding his attentions offensive . . . On a number of occasions women expressed concern, but were reassured by men . . . that he was harmless." This man was staying at Newbold House, "where he has stayed in the past and is known." (His booking was therefore not accepted in ignorance).

At some point in this hectic week of emotional indulgences, speakers spoke, and a "western mystery ritual" was enacted. Not included in the account was the well-confirmed verbal report that a more extroverted staff member of the Foundation had supplied his own element of "Surprise," at some late evening high point, by walking stark naked through the Hall. To sum up the conference I again quote from Andrew Murray's revealing write-up: "The group organising the Gathering from within the Foundation lacked, on the whole, in-depth knowledge of the scientific ideas which the Gathering was invoking, and the tools to absorb them. Although members of the presenting group . . . had impressive credentials, the Gathering as a whole failed to integrate this knowledge and allowed for little more than passing reference to it."

* * *

One of the fervent upholders of the commercial strategy in Holotropic Breathwork was Andrew Murray, the aforementioned Editor of *One Earth*. In the summer of 1990 he left the Foundation for further New Age prospects abroad, having already relinquished his role as Editor some months earlier. At the time of the Conference, (autumn 1989), Stefan offered to help, free of charge, with the orthodox magazine that Mr. Murray was leaving behind. But this offer was declined by the Director, for no clearly expressed reason.* Stefan also offered to help, free of charge, with the Accounts department, having some experience of basic accountancy. Yet this

*To add insult to injury the following appeared in the Editorial columns of the Spring 1990 issue: "Editorially, we are also thin on the ground. Andrew Murray intended to leave with the last issue but no one from within the Foundation has come forward to replace him. Consequently he has given some help with this issue for which I am very thankful." The magazine was eventually taken over by Associates.

offer was also ignored, even though the pressing vacancy in the Accounts department was operative for some time afterwards. All things considered, it was inevitable that this intelligent and sensitive young man eventually discontinued his voluntary work in the grounds of the Foundation under the conditions of stigma imposed upon him. One day he ceased to attend, when David said that it was no longer useful for him to observe the anomalies in this field of experience. It was David who had encouraged Stefan to produce *Confluence*, though without allowing the editor to quote from his (David's) books as the former wished. David consistently wanted to remain unknown to the Foundation, regarding Stefan's labours as an exercise in sociology.

It was understandable that Stefan had concluded that the "village" concept of the Foundation was superficial. Foundation brochures generally carry the statement: "A wider community and 'village' is growing as people with shared values and vision are coming to live alongside the Foundation." Stefan would ironically reflect (in private) that he was an independent thinker and therefore had to be squashed. He concluded that "shared values" meant conformism to therapy ideals, not to scientific visions or spiritual ones. Democratic representation of Associates was not allowed.

Yet the most elaborate attention was given to visiting celebrities on the New Age media. For instance, there was great excitement in the Foundation when Peter Russell recently went to stay at Minton House for several weeks. He was one of *the* New Age celebrities in Britain, and it was loudly proclaimed that he was completing a book while in sojourn at this venue in Findhorn. He received a great deal of attention and applause. After all, Peter Russell had helped to start the phase of Transcendental Meditation over twenty years before, and had been instrumental in establishing the therapy movement.

David also completed a book in the local area, but one that was entirely undeclared and unfeted. He now lived in the wing of another local house, one that was not part of any public exposure.

Meanwhile, I had retained an intermittent contact with the Foundation through the medium of voluntary domestic work (a requirement for Associates). I continued this sporadic contact for a short time after moving to Forres from Findhorn in the summer of 1990, my new abode being a pleasant bungalow within a few minutes walk from Cluny Hill College. In this way, I learned that several members had left the Foundation because of the Holotropic Breathwork Therapy. I also gleaned that a number of others had doubts and reservations about this therapy which they dared not express in case their positions were jeopardized.

In October, 1990, my Associate membership of the Findhorn

Foundation came to an end. It was actually due for renewal, but several weeks beforehand, I sent my usual eight-week subscription to *Rainbow Bridge*, and this was queried. The current Editor, Patricia, told me in a rather embarrassed manner that I could not have the recent issue until my cheque was "cleared" by Craig, (not in a monetary sense), who first wished to speak with me. This was highly irregular, and indeed unprecedented as far as I could ascertain, for the Director himself to become involved in matters of subscription. Some two weeks later, in which period I was debarred from purchasing the magazine, I received a letter from Craig Gibsone seeking to enquire my motivation prior to the assumed request for the renewal of my Associateship. He suggested we meet to discuss this.

I recollected my last, unhappy meeting with this obstructive man nearly a year ago. It was one requested by me, on the subject of Holotropic Breathwork Therapy, and also the matter of the rejection of my proffered coursework by Education Branch without any interview or investigation of content. (This was the occasion when I was told it was "inappropriate"). A recent copy of *Rainbow Bridge* acquired from a friend announced that a further cycle of Holotropic Breathwork Therapy was imminent. It was obvious that the Foundation was going ahead with the programme earlier envisaged by its Director.

After some thought I sent the following to Craig Gibsone, and thus concluded my connection with all that he represented:

"Thank you for your note, which I was rather surprised to receive as I'm sure you do not usually query the motivation of prospective associates for second-year 'membership' or renewal of subscription for *Rainbow Bridge*.

"My motivation has not changed in the slightest since my original application for associate membership. As I told you, I came to the Findhorn Foundation through an inner spiritual directive, and with the hope and intention of working within the Foundation in ways other than purely domestic (though I was more than willing to work domestically as well) and to share in particular the cosmic insights of a full-blown *kundalini* experience. You, and Education branch, managed to block this most effectively by denying me membership at the time I applied for it, refusing any aspect of my work in your Internal Education programmes, and ensuring my non-inclusion in any Conference programme – all without any investigation at all of whatever I might have on offer, which incidentally, was offered free.

"It so happens that I do not now wish to renew my associate membership. The directive that has held me here on the periphery of your activities for two and a half years has recently been most firmly withdrawn.

"I do not personally wish to associate myself anyway with the promotion of holotropic breathwork therapy, which I believe to be dangerous and a deliberate attempt to 'break in' unlawfully to the karmic store of the individual. I also do not feel happy about your new 1991 brochure and the Foundation's increasing dependence on the Game of Transformation, which definitely does not do (and cannot do, by its very nature) what you claim for it in your advertisements.

"Likewise your promotion of the Foundation as a Mystery School is unsupportable as far as I am concerned. The persons to whom you have given charge of this endeavour do not, to my perception, have the knowledge or expertise to safely conduct other souls through the very wide-ranging esoteric practices advertised, assuming these practices to be currently legitimate and effective as tools of spiritual development (which I do not believe). I have also yet to meet the Foundation members who have 'specialist knowledge and experience' (page 13 of your brochure) in these fields. I fear you are increasingly playing with fire in the sphere of esotericism. The multiple use of techniques gleaned from any and every religion does nothing for interior development, the activation of which is a highly skilled function for which very few persons are qualified. Such use of techniques will not promote inner growth, but rather inner chaos. Your claims on pages 14/15 of the new brochure cannot be substantiated by the course tutors concerned, however well intentioned. In the field of evolutionary progression, which is what 'Mystery Schools' are surely for, a university qualification is no indication of the required expertise; nor is clairvoyance or any form of psychism. None of you have any right, and certainly no spiritual authorisation, to experiment with human development through the use of outmoded and misplaced techniques in the irresponsible manner you are doing today. Your visitors may say 'wonderful' and doubtless have some kind of experiences and a very good time (although this is not always the case). But the visitors accept in trust what you give them, and do not pretend to know best. What you are doing, in fact, is making very good livings for a variety of people in the name of interior growth – accentuated, of course, by ecological trappings and a superb environment. That is a major spiritual offence, and one for which you will surely be called to task. Sincerely, Kate Thomas."

There was no reply. The Director of the Findhorn Foundation simply scrawled my name and address angrily all over an envelope, and returned my *Rainbow Bridge* subscription cheque. As always, he refused to confront any issue, and simply pursued his own way regardless of anyone else. I was never, ever given any explanation for

the hostility he had consistently shown me, or any reason for the continual blockage of my efforts at inclusion or my wish to promote specific work. The ruling hierarchy would simply not permit me any foothold, and on numerous occasions made plain they did not wish to know me. If what I said was based on truth, then they have much to account for.

The above-quoted letter was dated November 3rd, 1990. Within a fortnight of sending it, other things began to happen (not in connection with the Findhorn Foundation), and as a consequence, a large house was made available in the vicinity of Forres, in which to establish a fresh phase of wholly independent work.

The claim of the Foundation to be a Mystery School requires firm analysis. Even taking into account the loose definitions of subjects like "Mystery Schools" in the modern West, it is clear that Craig Gibsone meant something purportedly spiritual, esoteric, and adept. The events and trends which the Foundation continues to sponsor belie such a claim in the view of those who retain a due sense of education. I will select here some of the more glaring discrepancies:

In early December 1990 (a month after I had sent my letter above-quoted), a weekend workshop was held at the Park by the resident member, Michael Lee. It was entitled "Expanding Your Comfort Zone: A Reichian Sexuality Workshop." The advertisement in *Rainbow Bridge* explicitly stated that the theme of this workshop would be "exploring all aspects of sexuality." There was the further explicit clarification: "From gender roles and how they affect self-image, to attitudes towards intimacy, and how they help or hinder us in making deep and pleasurable contact with others. We will work to create a safe space in which to explore and take risks; to look at the roots of our experience as sexual beings." The workshop leader's definition of bioenergetics (a common term in therapy) was "expanding your capacity for pleasure on an emotional and physical level, by working through energy blocks, using methods derived from the work of Wilhelm Reich." The comforting reflection was added: "We will also explore the direct connection between sexuality and Spirit." The charge for this weekend would be "Between £30 and £40, by your own attunement." The workshop leader made the unusual gesture of not charging a higher price of admission to Associates, who usually had to pay more for everything than resident members, though he retained the customary phrase of "members and associates," which often gave Associates the feeling that they did not really belong to the spiritual community.

There was a further series of Holotropic Breathwork sessions at the Park involving Dr. Grof's commercial experiment in hyperventilation, bodywork, and excessively loud music. The resident therapists had

become accustomed to pronouncing this experiment to be part of a spiritual development programme, reassured against the minority of doubts by the Director's insistence upon the "esoteric" complement of sessions and courses. All feelings of sickness and hysteria encountered in Holotropic Breathwork were stated to be of spiritual import. Mr. Gibsone became one of the major facilitators conducting these Breathwork sessions.

Another popular workshop was scheduled for March 1991, and entitled "Tantra – Love – Sexuality." The venue was Minton House, a residential centre for healing, and run in association with the Foundation. Minton House is opposite the Park, and was host to the "visiting scholars" like Dr. Stanislav Grof and Peter Russell. It thus participated to a considerable extent in the limelight accruing to the Foundation. Courses held there were well attended by Foundation members, and were advertised in Foundation media. This course in Tantric Sexuality could be learnt about in the Community Centre at the Park, and generous space was awarded to it in the internal magazine *Rainbow Bridge*. Two visiting Germans conducted this course, having become popular at the Foundation by means of a similar course held the previous year. The course consisted of two weekend workshops, one for beginners and the other "Advanced," meaning last year's group. Each workshop totalled twenty-six hours in duration, and for each workshop there was a charge of £75. The advert declared that "you will have another chance to explore your sexuality on the spiritual level." The only other description of the content of these workshops was: "They (the workshop leaders) will guide us to experience how to interweave Sexuality, Heart and the Divine by doing exercises to prepare our bodies for special rituals. There will be space for sharing about all different aspects of sexuality, experiences and feelings from the childhood up to the present."

Appended was a statement giving the credentials of the workshop leaders, which I here quote in full: "Hanna is a dancing teacher and psychotherapist of Neo-Reichian Therapy and has been running groups for more than eleven years. Jens is a psychologist (Dipl.) and doing Rogerian and Neo-Reichian Therapy. They have both led Tantra groups in Berlin for six years since training with Margo Masledvikow, Ajit Mookerjee and Mantak Chia." I should add that the advert was headed by the exhortation to: "Expand your spirituality by connecting sexuality and spirit."

Many varieties of therapist currently invoke experiences in childhood as the source of many personal problems. This may well be so in some cases, but in my own experience of groupwork this is an acutely generalised and hopelessly inaccurate excuse for therapy.

One of the major sources of personal problems, I have often ascertained, are the personal links between adults, including both permissive and married relationships. Numerous types of intimate human relationships achieve very little other than the production of unwanted and unhappy children in one-parent families and similar disparate situations. The relegation of problems to the childhood phase is an excuse for more personal indulgence in too many cases. The influence of Reichian therapy means that adult problems are reduced to the category of insufficient sexual gratification.

It was well known that there were several "survivors" from child abuse living at the Foundation. This might have been one of the cues afforded to the theme of "Healing the Inner Child" which was promoted in "therapeutic workshops" conducted by a man whose major qualification for this activity was a Bachelor of Arts degree. These popular workshops at the Foundation were advertised in *Rainbow Bridge* as drawing upon skills in Gestalt therapy, psychodrama, guided imagery and bodywork, to help participants strengthen their sense of wellbeing. An acquaintance of mine attended one of these workshops in February 1991, paying £20 for the privilege. The participants were divided into three groups, and it was said that the workshop leader lost control of two of these – one group became very emotional, and the other exhibited extreme aggression that was very disquieting to the more peaceable donors to the event.

Other, prominently advertised weekend workshops were those given by Ulla Sebastian, a staff member who was also a follower of Satya Sai Baba and a strong supporter of Holotropic breathwork. These workshops were specifically for "residential women," and entitled "Women, Sex and Love." I quote from the one scheduled for April 12th–14th with a fee of £30–£50 (p.4 Apl 3rd issue R.B.), "This workshop is an open space for women to explore and share experiences, fantasies, dreams and addictions around sex and love and to investigate blocks in the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual bodies which prevent sexual fulfilment and the expression of love." The advertisement carried Ulla's qualification for this work – "I trained in psychoanalysis, bioenergetic analysis, group dynamics and group therapy. In my work as a therapist . . . I focussed on the body structures which prevent sexual pleasure and fulfilment and distort the understanding of love. I have a special interest in personal boundaries and self-empowerment. . . .On a practical level, I investigated the collective dimension in a German community whose main concern was to free the sexual energy from its cultural distortions in order to reach spiritual enlightenment. Coming to the Foundation has allowed me to explore love in its different aspects. Recent experiences have shifted my focus towards the link between

emotional/sexual abuse and sex/love addiction." I should perhaps mention that Ulla Sebastian was highly regarded in the Foundation, and also by Craig Gibsone, for her supposed knowledge of Western Mysteries, and had written a recently printed series of articles on that subject for *Rainbow Bridge*.

One female participant in Holotropic Breathwork sessions gave a report of her recent experiences in *Rainbow Bridge* (February 14th, 1991, p. 6). "At one point I felt trapped, as though in a mental asylum," she reflected, though the report attempted a positive interpretation of the traumas encountered. She enjoyed the music that was played, but the breathing intensification produced an experience of "pain, darkness and suffering." This led to a scene in which Craig Gibsone and other male facilitators held her arms and legs "while pressing points on my body." She struggled against them and "expended a lot of suppressed rage. I screamed long and loud, until my voice was too hoarse to continue. Then I collapsed in a quivering wreck, too exhausted to fight anymore." This woman attended two subsequent sessions, and was engulfed by despair when she remembered acutely her unpleasant experiences as a victim of child abuse. She decided that this was a positive step, which she was certainly led to believe. She mentioned that she welcomed the women's support group that was to commence the same week, described in the same issue (p. 7) as an "incest survivors self-help/support group." It appears that a number of other women had similar traumatic experiences in Holotropic Breathwork sessions, and it would seem inevitable that they needed some form of support group, which was notably averse to any masculine presence. The writer abovementioned reported with honesty that her male partner "spent most of his three hour session (of H.B.) in blissful surrender, enjoying a vast array of sexual fantasies."

In the general euphoria over Holotropic Breathwork, it was disconcerting to some of the more sensitive members of the Foundation to learn of a strongly alleged case of sexual abuse of a child occurring within Foundation ranks, amongst residents of the caravan park. This case was investigated by the police and social services in the winter of 1991. Courtenay Young, the leading therapist in the Foundation, wrote at that time: "It is highly unlikely that anything can or will be proved beyond all shadow of doubt and therefore speculation as to who are involved seems totally inappropriate." (*Rainbow Bridge*, February 20th, 1991, p. 7). There is the discernible influence of unconditional love in the charity extended here, and also in the alleged crime. Love is a strange word in therapy, owing to the insidious stress that suppressed feelings have to be manifested.

Such workshops as those mentioned above might well lead to

something resembling the Bacchanalian rites of some purported ancient "Mysteries," but that is not esotericism or adeptship. I regret to conclude that such tendencies as those demonstrated in modern "Mysteries" merely afford a convenient livelihood for the subversives of the path to purification and illumination.

I would like here to add that I do not claim the status of a "Mystery School," which is a term of grossly confused meaning with which I feel no affinity. That kind of Mystery I want nothing to do with, since it has the connotations of a game in which education is stunted.

* * *

In the Findhorn Foundation Guest programme for March to November, 1989, was an article by Eileen Caddy in which she described her participation in the Planetary Game of Transformation. This game took place during the internal conference, and was played by the whole community. Eileen took a principal role after exhibiting considerable resistance. She says: "This meant I had to put myself out there in front of the whole community! I prayed as I had never done before for the highest possible outcome. I was terrified! My prayers were answered because each move I made on the board was perfect in every way. All I can say is that I have never felt so loved, appreciated, supported and respected as I did when I played that Game of Transformation. I *was* transformed. My whole attitude towards the community changed and it has continued in that way ever since. I realised that it was I who had to do the changing first, and the community responded accordingly.

"Since that time, I feel closer to the community than I have ever felt, and I have been in it for 26 years! I am no longer hiding myself in the background; I find I can say what I feel about the spiritual side of things because I know that is paramount and because I know I will be listened to. Through it all not only did my attitude change towards the centre of the community, but I feel the whole community went through a transformation and rebirth as well. It is difficult for me to pinpoint exactly how or where this rebirth is taking place as I experience it very much as a feeling."

"Like the Prodigal Son, we have returned to the Father, to the Source, and there is great rejoicing. This is God's community as it was in the beginning and as it always will be. We are moving up onto that higher turn of the spiral. Praise be!"

These statements were evidently not serious enough to extend into the subsequent holotropic phase, but they do attest Eileen Caddy's conviction in the efficacy of the board game named "The Game of

Transformation," and also constitute a glowing advertisement for its use. She thus sanctioned the numerous, and very expensive courses arranged by the Foundation staff on the behalf of InnerLinks Inc., the business company initiated by two members of the Foundation who created this game. Until recently, this game was selling for £37 in its presentation box, though the price may have been increased since I last enquired. It has been incorporated into a number of different courses on a regular basis, courses which make much of group participation in this game set. But it also holds the status of a course in its own right, to the extent indeed that there are now also related Training Programmes for Facilitators, Special Topic Training, and Training for Workshop Leaders. The claims made for this game have been regarded as infantile by intelligent people, who view it only as an alternative to amusement arcades. The two Foundation members who created it made a very successful marketing venture of it in America, and even in more sober England, wealthy women are prepared to pay several hundred pounds to "learn" it and then "teach" it themselves, for a fee.

The habit of making the concept of transformation into a game is remarkably regular amongst affluent Westerners neglecting to cultivate a due critical acumen (which is less remunerative).

At the time of going to press, a new book about the Findhorn Foundation has just made an appearance, called *The Findhorn Community: Creating a Human Identity for the 21st Century*, by Carol Riddell. This book, published by Findhorn Press, was written, as the author tells us (p. 99), with the support of the Core Group and sanctioned in one of their meditations. It has therefore gained official approval.

The book is well written and attractively illustrated, but in my view presents a facade not in complete accordance with the truth. It glosses every point it touches concerning the life of the community, a drawback which extends to the life of the author, who tells us many things about herself but skirts carefully around the psychological issue that she started off life as a male. In ordinary life this might not signify, but as the chosen spokesperson of a declared spiritual community, the viewpoint presented, with its inherent psychological need for acceptance and natural bias towards those with similar problems, must yield an effect. The wavelength transmitted will reach those with related wavelengths. To read, for instance, on page 157: "Although the community is overwhelmingly heterosexual, we accept relationship between people of the same sex without hesitation, where there is a feeling that love rather than ideology or exhibitionism is the basis of the tie. We had a most moving blessing of a relationship between two women not long ago . . ." will

inevitably attract an increasing number of homosexuals, not all with the devotionalism expressed by Carol Riddell. I am frankly amazed that a predominantly heterosexual community can approve this, just as I am amazed that they can knowingly allow a person who has changed sex to share a room over a several month period with someone who is ignorant of this fact. It is carrying liberalism too far for healthy normality and betokens a complete lack of awareness of the science of energies. This misguided "liberalism" almost inevitably paves the way for the "anything goes" syndrome. I am not here publicising a matter on which Carol Riddell has formerly been reticent. My knowledge of the facts derives from an article written by herself, and published in *One Earth* some years ago, describing the trauma of changing her sex. Whereas I have every sympathy for persons caught in this type of crisis, I am convinced that such sexually oriented psychologies (one has to be almost obsessed with one's own sexuality to surgically change it, especially after parenting a child) are unsuited in *this* lifetime to promote transcendental development in others, which is what Ms. Riddell purports to do. There are various references in her book to her "students."

Among much other interesting material in *The Findhorn Community* is a series of interviews, one of which is with Craig Gibsone, curiously subtitled "Craig Gibsone – From Addict to Foundation Focaliser" (p. 209). In relation to addiction, meaning alcohol, sex and drugs (including LSD), he states: "I think I must be a natural addict; my father and grandfather were alcoholics. Much of my life has been spent overcoming addiction – especially to alcohol."* The Findhorn community provided for him a non-restrained place of rehabilitation.

Another revealing interview is with Eileen Caddy, who guilelessly tells us on page 206: "You know, I find it dreadfully difficult. I have this awful thought that I'm a hypocrite; yet it wouldn't have been allowed (her teaching) to come through if I was. I do want to live the Truth, to be the Truth – I am the Truth. But doubts come over me now and again. Why should I have been chosen? I accept that God needs channels. I accept that Peter needed me so he could be used to create the Findhorn Community." She also asserts (p. 206): "I have to recognise that I am a world teacher. I need to stop being afraid to face this, because it is the truth – I'm a world teacher of God's word." On page 207 she says (referring to her state of inner conflict) – "I deal with my dilemma by working with the Christ energies. That's how it will be resolved. I use affirmations: 'I am a beautiful Christ-filled being.' 'I claim my Christ-light now.' 'I claim Love now, unconditional, universal Love now.' . . .'I am enfolded by, infilled

*Carol Riddell, *The Findhorn Community* (Findhorn Press, 1991), p. 210.

with this wondrous Love. Let this love flow all around me, out to the whole community, out and out to the whole world.'" Later, on page 208, she reiterates: "I feel terribly humble in being used in this way and I still ask myself, 'Why me?'" At the conclusion of this very emotional interview, Eileen states (p. 209): "One day my two sides will come together and there won't be any separation. It will resolve itself." I do hope so, for the sake of all the young aspirants who come to her in trust of her much publicised authority.

* * *

In the spring of 1991, I learned that Craig Gibsone was about to relinquish his directorship of the Findhorn Foundation and take a three month vacation in the United States. I heard also that many changes were about to take place within the organisation as a whole – it was being "reshaped" to include more intimately the wider community of Associates.

As I was then living practically on their doorstep, I made the decision to reapply for associate membership in the hope that under a new directorship, the Foundation and myself could at last achieve an amicable relationship in which I would have a legitimate voice – one that could reach the increasing numbers of young people now streaming into their environs through the widely increased New Age publicity given out by the media.

I therefore made an application and, after some delay, was invited for interview, and here I met an immediate stumbling block. The problem, it seemed, was not my past criticism of holotropic breathwork (which I reiterated), nor my objections to "The Game of Transformation" in its unproven though well-advertised role as a "tool for growth based on esoteric principles." No, the hesitation in reincluding me stemmed solely from the "incompatibility" of my "energies" with the integrity of certain of their membership. One of the two interviewees, Loren Stewart, stated quite frankly that "many staff members" opposed my application, and thus the matter must be passed directly to Craig Gibsone on his return, for he it was who had dealt with my former resignation.

As this matter of "energies" had never been mentioned before, I asked the names of these unknown staff members, and also the actual nature of their grievance against me, as I genuinely did not know. This information was not forthcoming, despite the fact that I spent two hours at the interview, at the end of which I was told that further discussion was necessary and that this would be arranged for three weeks time. Although I was in considerable pain throughout the interview, having severely sprained my ankle the previous day, and

which furthermore made walking very difficult, I was not allowed to have lunch, or to even enter, the Community Centre – a courtesy never normally withheld from anyone, and for which privilege I would willingly have paid. This lack of consideration set the tone for most of my brief reconnection with this organisation.

On my return home I wrote the following letter, dated June 19th, 1991, to Loren (the same man earlier mentioned):

"With regard to our meeting of this morning, it is obvious to me from your comments and Jill Brierley's that most of your staff membership do not welcome my inclusion in Foundation affairs. I, in turn, am not at all happy about their attitudes towards *me* – attitudes verging on hostile in some cases, and for which I have never been given an explanation. My work is clearly considered an undesirable commodity by the ruling elite of your community, assessed without ever sampling it, I must point out. Nevertheless, nothing of value can be achieved under such circumstances, and I am therefore withdrawing my re-application to become an associate member."

This letter elicited the following, very pleasant response, signed by both interviewees, and dated June 22nd:

"We are sorry that you have decided to withdraw from further discussion concerning your associate membership, before completing the process we had begun toward healing the past misunderstandings.

"However, we fully accept this position and wish you well in your endeavours. We also wish to state that should you ever see the need to complete, we would try and facilitate the process.

"As we stated to you in our discussion, we see your part in this growing village – that you have your part to play – and that we can honour that part. In our opinion, the parts may not always agree with one another yet each one helps to make up the whole. We support you in working with your truth and we hope that you can support us in working with ours.

"The best to you at this time, Kate. We remain, Sincerely, Loren Stewart (Personnel Focaliser) and Jill Brierley (Associate Focaliser)."

The morning of my receipt of this letter coincided with my learning of certain statements made independently by two prominent members of the community who had come to some similar conclusions as those voiced by me in the past, with the very great difference that their views were tolerated, and in some instances, even applauded. These views included the assertion that the quality of attunements varied according to the capacity or "clearness" of those attuning, and that the much used term, "creating your own reality" was oversimplistic and frequently mis-used. On discovering this interesting information, I telephoned Loren and enquired why these written

statements were permissible when some persons made them, but not when made by others, i.e., me. He evaded an answer by saying he had not yet read the material in which these comments were found. But it was on the basis of these comments that I agreed to continue with my application, and I shortly received the following from Loren, dated June 25th:

"Thank you for your telephone call. It was good to hear that you do want to complete the process that we started.

"Jill will be away at the end of this week for two weeks. After talking with Jill, we agreed that we would both like to be involved in a follow up interview with you. So please bear with the time difficulty and we will contact you for a talk when Jill returns. Thank you for your patience. Sincerely, Loren."

This suggested interview never took place, and for reasons which grew increasingly complex and obtuse. When I next wrote to Loren I was still unaware of this, or of what was actually happening, but I included the copy of a letter he had asked for – the one outlining the coursework I had offered the community in late 1989. He had told me he had asked Eric Franciscus, the head of Education Branch, why this had been refused, and Eric had informed him that he had "sent a spy" to my talk, and the "spy" had reported it as hopelessly unsuitable. My letter, dated July 2nd, read as follows:

"Thank you for your letter. I had hoped to connect with you this week, as I applied for associate membership at the end of May, and I still do not know my position. It seems I still have another fortnight to wait.

"You mentioned that you would like to see my original letter to Eric Franciscus, so I am sending you a freshly typed copy from the carbon. I would like to point out that I gave two talks only in the Foundation, one on November 7th (the date of writing the letter, which was obviously not received by Eric until the following day) and one on December 13th, long after a decision concerning myself had been made. In the Ed. Branch minutes of November 14th 1989 (as printed in *Rainbow Bridge*), it was stated that I could be offered facilities to rent premises from the Foundation throughout the winter season, but that whatever I presented would not be part of internal education. Those present at the meeting were listed as Eric, Charles, Jill, Frances, Thomas and Craig. I do not know Jill, Frances or Thomas, and have only ever spoken a few words to Eric. I do not, of course, question any decision made by Ed. Branch on the basis of adequate information – they presumably know best the spiritual requirements of the Foundation. My complaint was that my offer was never investigated, but dismissed on the spot. I did not even receive the courtesy of a written reply. To find out what had

happened I had to telephone and enquire. Craig, when asked, merely said my work was "inappropriate." In view of the large quantity of channelled and other "teachings" accepted without question by Ed. Branch, I still feel unsatisfied by this response. To say that the Foundation does not have "teachers" (as stated by yourself) seems to me to be begging the issue. You *are* teaching, by means of focalisers taking groups, and by course work promoted by various persons including Eileen Caddy, William Bloom, Caroline Myss, Matthew Fox, Carol Riddell – to name but a few – and all student members, staff members and thousands of guests are certainly influenced by what is taught them, accepting it by and large as truth. This is irrefutably demonstrated by a uniform terminology and slant of ideas. Ask any Findonian! But is it all *truth*? Is there no room for ideas and concepts derived from direct discernment and other-dimensional experience just because these bring cherished beliefs into dispute?

"Incidentally, of the fourteen persons who attended my first talk, only one was a member, Eve, (an Associate), and she wished to participate in a course if I started one, and consistently asked about this for some weeks afterwards. Therefore, she is unlikely to have given an unfavourable report. With very best wishes."

There was no reply to this letter, nor was there any further notification of an appointment for interview at the specified time. I tried to contact Jill Brierley, to find she had been unavoidably delayed while on holiday. The switchboard receptionist at my request then put me through to Loren, who expressed great annoyance that he had been "interrupted" during an interview. I protested that I had not known this, and pointed out that the receptionist had informed him of the call – though not the name of the caller, it seemed – but it was clear by his manner that his attitude towards me had changed, and I did not know why. I was to learn the answer through a series of swiftly arising events involving a young woman whom I knew very well. This young woman was a former Cambridge Research Centre student who had entered the Foundation in late February 1991 as a "Living in Community Guest" (known as an LCG) during a lapse in her CRC studentship (this work always being discontinuous for individual students), and she had since rather rashly become an apprentice member (known as CAP), which meant she had full rights of membership, but not the right to vote on policy. She now contacted me to tell me how shocked she had been by the comments recently made about me by various persons, (most of whom I did not actually know – and some of whom were not even linked with the Foundation during my term of contact). These comments, ranging from the type of remark one would ignore,

to more serious accusations (all of which were untrue), culminated in actual defamation of character, and to such an extent that my former student became rapidly unwell under the stress of the illwill that she confronted at every turn.

In the meantime I had managed to contact Jill Brierley, who told me that Eric Franciscus (a devotee of Satya Sai Baba) had vetoed my associate membership, and because of this and "other" problems, Loren insisted I must now wait for Craig Gibsone's return before proceeding further. She then suggested that I should become a "Community member" as an alternative, for this was a "looser" connection with the Foundation – much more peripheral – for which she would send me an application form. Choosing my words carefully, I asked if she had been shown my letter to Loren of July 2nd, complete with its enclosure. She said she had not; that Loren had omitted to pass it on to her and must have forgotten it.

At this juncture, my former student again contacted me with further disturbing information concerning what was being said about me within the Foundation. This related to statements purportedly made by me, and things I had supposedly done, all quite untrue, and hostile comments such as there was "no way" that persons such as myself could find acceptance at Cluny* – this latter from the current focaliser, to whom I had never spoken, and with whom I had not even come into contact.

Feeling quite sick about the situation that now surrounded my application, on August 5th I rescinded it, quite categorically, by letter to Jill Brierley, before leaving for Cambridge for other concerns there. I quote:

"Dear Jill,

I received your community membership form on Wednesday last, for which I thank you, but I am still waiting to hear from you as promised regarding Eric Franciscus's veto on my formerly proposed associate membership, also the names and views of others whom Loren asserted were reactive to me, and which I found difficult to believe. I had further hoped to receive your comments on my letter sent to Loren when you were on holiday, which contained details of the course offered for Internal Education in November 1989 that he asked for, and which I understood would be passed on to you. In case it is still not to hand, I am enclosing a copy.

"As to Loren's insistence that I should meet with Craig before possible readmission, I would wish to make clear that I am not prepared to consult with Craig on this or any other matter. I have already suffered sufficient rudeness from him to date, a fact known and witnessed on far too many occasions by others.

*Cluny Hill College.

"I have learned in the past week that Loren was unhappily correct in his assertions, and that various people at Cluny Hill College have much to say about me – including people, incidentally, with whom I have either had no verbal contact, ever, or who are completely unknown to me.

". . . These, and other related matters recently brought to my attention, I cannot let pass without protest. The staff of the Findhorn Foundation have no authority to make judgements either on myself or on my work *unless they have* just cause to do so. I made a further approach to your organisation simply because I am now resident in this area, and because I was told that Craig Gibsone was no longer its Director – I hoped that this would pave the way for other options. I see now the impossibility of attempting to work amongst people already poisoned so effectively against me, and please bear in mind here that I have not attempted to communicate the full extent of what I have heard – which much upset my informant who finds it hard to equate such attitudes with the 'unconditional love' so constantly claimed by the Findhorn Foundation. What is occurring now amounts to slander – a fact I am no longer prepared to tolerate. Will you please therefore look into this in order to ascertain why it is happening. I *do* require an explanation, and in the very near future.

"Please also note that in view of the above I have no further interest in becoming a community member."

My rescission did not, however, affect the situation for Gemma (formerly referred to as Gloria). A few days later she wrote to Stefan and recounted the substance of her conversations with various people, all of whom had much to say about myself, most of it hearsay or the product of distortion. Several persons repeated the same story – one she refuted as an assumption that had no basis. Her letter continued:

"This story seems to have been put out by Eric – and Alec, Ulf and others all used the same words.

"Eric's point of view was far more serious and flagrantly distorted, and he offered me a picture of Kate that in no way did I recognise. . . . He put Kate in the category of 'weird' people (who would definitely be kept out of the Foundation), a category which also included someone seriously psychologically unbalanced. He said that what she had to offer was not in alignment with what the Foundation wished to promote. They wanted well-known people like Caroline Myss, David Earl Platts, William Bloom, etc; 'reliable' drawers of people who were also likely to be money spinners. He also said that unless Kate changed he wasn't prepared to listen to her . . ." The letter concluded with the comment: "Eric himself said and puts it about that he believes that God has given him the custodianship of

Cluny. He has also stated that he is aware of the diminishment of his own ego."

Gemma's reactions to what was being said produced problems for herself. People began to treat her as if she was a troublemaker, and some were very rude and offensive. Her implication that something was gravely wrong within the staff membership of the Foundation did not endear her to persons bent on having a good time, and who resented the emotional distress she demonstrated. She had tried on four occasions to arrange a meeting with Eileen Caddy, not on the issue of myself, but in relation to the fact that certain focalisers had given verbal space to a self-confessed male witch who was part of an active coven, and to a woman (with whom he at this point commenced a relationship) who wished to conduct rituals involving the evocation of the elemental kingdom – their joint declared intent being to "take over" the Findhorn Foundation for its betterment and progress. These focalisers had even allowed the two magicians to utilise the group meditative resources to this end. Eileen Caddy had sanctioned the woman's credibility by telling her in a private interview that she would one day be "a great healer," or teacher, and Gemma wished to know *why*. This matter was so serious in its manifestations that the couple were despatched from Cluny Hill College before their term of residence was completed. But for whatever the reason, Eileen Caddy declined to give Gemma a hearing, and Eric Franciscus likewise chose not to do so. Feeling frustrated in the extreme, Gemma wrote him a letter, dated 13th August, a copy of which she also sent to the overall focaliser of Cluny Hill College, where she was now located:

"Dear Eric,

I felt I should write to you as you are obviously so busy you cannot spare 10 minutes of your time for me to put my queries and concerns to you that arose after my last conversation with you. So after you have read this maybe you could spare me 5, or even 3 minutes in response?

"I said at the time we spoke that the image you put to me of Kate Thomas as seen by you and, it seems the Foundation generally, was one that I in no way recognised in my (seven) years of knowing her. There were very definite points made by you that I knew were highly unlikely. So I rang Kate to verify what you had said and, subsequently, to try to understand how such views about her could have arisen. When I mentioned to her your statement that she had said she had come to save the Foundation, or that she could save the Foundation, that she presented herself as a guru figure, that she was trying to recruit 'devotees,' and that she 'pursued' people saying she could help them and that 'one or two of them came to you with

complaints' – Kate said that these things were *totally untrue* and were in fact *lies*. She has said or done none of these things. In my personal experience of Kate *I* have never seen her do any such thing in any situation. This is why I pursue this further, because your description and my experience are at such total variance. This puts me in a position where I have to ask a very big WHY. Why have certain people 'picked up' on Kate Thomas and misinterpreted her so wilfully? And, perpetuated this viewpoint quite blatantly. If her 'energies' are at variance with the Foundation as *you* felt and that she didn't 'fit in,' why is this turned into what looks to me like a campaign to slur her name? Why are viewpoints being put forward that Kate says are untrue? If you believe that your viewpoint *is* true, then the least that should be done is that this should be specifically substantiated. Kate herself has said that the lies that have been put to me are libellous.

"You spoke to me as though Kate Thomas was some sort of jumped up psychic who felt she could 'get' something from the Foundation. You seem to be very ill-informed about her or her background. Have you or others ever wished to know? She is in fact a highly respected Sufi Instructor. She had several groups in Cambridge, of carefully selected students, not arbitrary collections of people, as part of a Research Centre (The Cambridge Research Centre for Metaphysical and Evolutionary Studies). She has written books, and is in the process of writing the third part of her autobiography, the first two parts having already been published. She has also held talks and lectures with invited speakers well-known in the fields of psychology and science. Kate Thomas has a fine reputation which representatives of the Findhorn Foundation seem quite at liberty to slur and make false accusations and libellous comments about. This is *wrong* from any standpoint. It is wrong, Eric.

"You spoke to me about the high integrity you have, along with Loren and Craig (in particular). I have far greater knowledge and experience of Kate Thomas's integrity, which I put at the very highest I have personally known. In this light the 'integrity' you put forward regarding the viewpoint about her that you personally hold cannot be viewed with any seriousness by me whatsoever. Therefore, you must know, in some part of yourself, that the allegations you put forward about her conduct and how she presented herself whilst at the Foundation, are *NOT* true. As you and others persist in this viewpoint, then, again I say, Kate Thomas at least, and myself, need specific substantiation of this. It needs to be proved. The Findhorn Foundation's representatives cannot crush someone's valid reputation merely because they see fit to handle this situation in this curious

way. Apparently, according to Kate, no group, be it core group, management etc., or other authoritative individuals have given or allowed her a proper hearing. I find this absolutely astonishing in what is purported to be a centre of openness, 'sharings,' let alone the 'unconditional love.' Why is it different in this case? How often are other people mishandled and grossly misrepresented in other ways and other cases? For me personally this represents an eye opener and an education, illustrating aspects of the Foundation's representatives that I hadn't known before and which I find disturbing, making me question what the Findhorn Foundation is really standing for and what it actually really upholds, by the representatives who carry it forward into the future.

". . . Are you or anyone else prepared to put this right? And if not, why not? If you won't 'hear' me on this, what do I have to do to be heard? To me this is a matter of principle that has been grossly flaunted. It cannot be left unchallenged. What is wrong is wrong, whichever way one tries to look at it. Yours, Gemma."

The upshot of this was a yet more stressful time for the student in question. Eric was extremely annoyed on receipt of the letter, and particularly as a copy had been sent to someone else. He warned Gemma that if she persisted in taking this matter further, she was liable to get "burnt." His manner was so hostile throughout this conversation that Gemma telephoned me in Cambridge and broke down completely; her position at the College was rapidly becoming untenable. Stefan now took up the matter on Gemma's behalf and attempted to reach Eric by telephone, but Eric refused to speak to him, and instead, of his own accord, arranged a meeting that evening between Gemma and himself, with Loren and Jill Brierley in attendance. This was obviously intended to rectify his position in the eyes of others and to put Gemma in her place. Gemma was so alarmed by all this that she requested of Janice (the only CRC student at that time not present in Cambridge) that she should also attend the meeting to support her and prevent further intimidation. This Janice agreed, whereupon the meeting was suddenly put forward two hours and Janice was hard pressed to arrive on time. The date was August 15th. Gemma's report on this meeting was contained in a letter to Stefan, which she sent off the following day. I quote:

"Eric said that if he had known I was going to quote him back to himself he would have put things very differently – phrased it more carefully – he cited the example that if he was talking to a journalist he would put things differently than if it were to someone else. He said that because of this I had 'betrayed his integrity.'

"Eric called me a liar, quoting my saying I hadn't used his name when referring to the 'threat' – because I must have done so for

Stefan to know who to phone. I replied that of course I had used his name on that occasion, it was nonsense not to; that when I said I *hadn't* used his name it referred to the time he had spoken to my focaliser, who had reported to him that I had expressed anger in sharings – but that as far as I could remember I had never used his name on these occasions (i.e., in open sharings). This all arose when he spoke to me after reading my letter – when he warned me that if I continued to ask questions I would get 'burnt.' He altered this at the meeting to an expression of his concern that I was being caught between two standpoints – Kate and the Foundation – and that his 'suggestion' had been that I shouldn't get involved in this as I was a nice person and could get 'burnt.' Eric expressed this with more force and emotion than I have written it.

"Eric asserted that he still stood by what he said. I said, 'Even though it wasn't true?' But he intimated that to him it was true. I said the picture that Eric put forward of Kate was one I in no way recognised, which Janice then substantiated, telling how she saw Kate's qualities and that she had known Kate for many years.

"When Loren spoke, he intimated that Eric had spoken too freely and out of turn, and if I had any questions to ask, to go to *him*. It seemed to me that he belittled Eric, though he himself was being very careful in what he was saying.

"I said that to not substantiate the things that were being said about Kate by others was wrong – Loren suggested that this was my viewpoint, from their side it possibly looked different. He said 'it' had been going on for a long time – three years, and they didn't want to prolong this, as often when Kate had anything to do with the Foundation there tended to be a toing and froing of letters and dissatisfaction.

"He said that Kate first became notorious (his word) in relation to the letters in *Rainbow Bridge* and her views on the holotropic breathwork. Janice countered this and put her concerns forward about the medical view of the breathwork and the brain damage it can cause, saying that Kate was quite right to hold her standpoint.

"Loren then said that Kate had mentioned to him before that certain people, like Charles Peterson, had been very obstructive. That they were willing to have a meeting with those concerned, to 'clear' this, though he didn't specify details. He offered to put a letter in *Rainbow Bridge* suggesting that anyone who had any adverse feeling or reaction towards Kate should contact her (not come to the meeting, which would only be for a few selected people). He said to let him know if he was to put the letter in, but his view and Jill's was that it would 'stir things up' unnecessarily. (He said when I next saw him that because such a letter would 'cause a fire' if the meeting was

to be an open one, he would only insert it the actual week of the meeting, on Craig's return).

"Loren then said that the very first time he saw Kate he recognised her as a 'powerful lady.' I don't know what he was suggesting by that.

"Eric came out of the whole meeting very badly, especially having been put down by Loren in a subtle way.

"Jill Brierley spoke mainly of the fact that a meeting had been offered to Kate, and this did seem a good idea but was inconceivable without Craig as he had had quite a lot to do with Kate in the past, so it should wait until Craig came back. Because things often seemed to 'happen' around Kate (meaning people's reactions and the propagating of lies) Jill felt the 'energy' around these things needed looking at – I don't know what she meant by this specifically. She also wondered why Kate wanted to be associated with the Foundation. They felt that associate membership wasn't appropriate for the time being, until things had been aired at this proposed meeting."

I spoke to Janice by telephone on the subject of the proposed meeting, which I was only prepared to attend if the whole matter was adequately confronted. She asserted with emphasis that she was quite convinced there would be no meeting; that the two hour session had merely been arranged to silence Gemma, who had asked too many embarrassing questions and had refused to let the matter rest.

This was borne out when Gemma approached Loren with regard to arrangements. I had told her that if there was to be a meeting, it should be held as soon as possible, and preferably within days of my return. Also, that it should be an "open" meeting as there had been so much publicity, and that anyone interested in attending as an observer would be welcome as far as I was concerned. Loren instantly said that this was out of the question – and then he retracted and said he would think about it and let Gemma know in a day or two. He did not do this, and the latter tried without success to contact him. Eric proved even more evasive, and made several appointments at Gemma's request, which he did not keep, using various excuses, much to her frustration.

On my return from Cambridge on August 27th, I received the following letter, dated August 21st, from Loren and Jill Brierley:

"Dear Kate,

We have your recent letter (of August 5th) and are sorry to read of the continuing distress this situation is causing you.

"Loren and I feel that it is in the best interest of all concerned that any further discussion of this issue be postponed until Craig Gibsone returns at the end of the Summer and we thought you had agreed to this.

"While our discussions are confidential, it does occur to us that this is another example of the confusion that habitually arises with your relationship with the Foundation.

"We will get in touch again after Craig's return. Yours, Jill Brierley and Loren Stewart."

This rather enigmatic wording, combined with Loren's consistent evasion of Gemma, and Eric's refusal of any further discussion on the matter of the proposed meeting, prompted Stefan to circulate a letter. This was sent out to fifty people within the Foundation, including Eileen Caddy, and read as follows:

AN OPEN LETTER TO MEMBERS OF
THE FINDHORN FOUNDATION:

September 4th 1991

"Some of you may be aware of the controversy that has recently again arisen concerning Kate Thomas, a former associate member who now resides in Forres. I am today in receipt of fully documented information regarding this matter, and wish to make clear, to those of you who are unaware of it, that defamatory and extremely damaging statements have been made by both senior staff and certain of your membership that are slanderous in nature and completely unsubstantiated by fact.

"The imputation is that Kate Thomas is some kind of cult figure or guru who wishes to 'take over' the Foundation, whose 'energies' are wholly incompatible with the spiritual orientation and integrity of various leading figureheads within the Foundation – that she is 'weird,' 'strange' and 'psychologically unstable,' that her proffered work (offered free of charge) is entirely unacceptable to your community, and that her proposed reapplication for associate membership should be blocked accordingly in the interests of everyone's well-being, and also because she formerly *resigned* on a matter of principle, which makes her a suspect character indeed.

"The above, and other, equally spurious allegations, have been brought to my attention by one of your number, a CAP member who suffered acute shock and distress to learn of the views held by those to whom she had allied herself by joining the Foundation. Like myself, she has known Kate Thomas for over six years and has been closely connected with her throughout that period. She is thus fully aware of the falsehood of the statements made, and the underlying illwill that breeds such untruths.

"The person responsible for many of these statements is Eric Franciscus, who, incidentally, has never even held a conversation with Kate Thomas, and has certainly never sampled her work, despite the fact that he dismissed it as 'unsuitable' for internal education without any prior personal investigation.

"I am, of course, fully aware that the allegations cited are but a partial representation of what continues to be ongoing internal gossip within the Foundation; that the distorted views inadvertently expressed by Eric are standard remarks that arise whenever the subject of Kate Thomas is mentioned. I am also acutely aware of the small clique of individuals who continue to pollute the minds of less-informed persons with what has effectively become the 'party line' on the subject of Kate. However, to date none of these propagandists have ever expressed their scurrilous remarks face to face with her, only behind her back.

"I very much doubt if it has occurred to anyone (in the caring, sharing Findhorn Foundation) how Kate feels about all this. Or what it is like to be the recipient of so many uncharitable thoughts, especially from persons whom one has never spoken with, or even met in some cases. Yes, we are all entitled to an opinion, but if that opinion is a lie, then such erroneous views need to be supplanted with the truth.

"Surely it it now time that this issue was confronted; that the propagandists who subscribe to the statements cited step forward and declare and substantiate their opinions face to face with Kate, in public. To this end it is suggested that an open meeting be held in the very near future, and may the spirit of truth prevail."

All this brought forth was an irate accusation from a senior staff member intent on ignoring what was actually being said. The remaining forty-nine copies of the letter drew forth no response – at least, not immediately. But on September 12th a letter, dated September 9th, came for me from Loren which declared itself a response to Stefan's letter to the Findhorn Foundation. It read:

"Dear Kate,

This letter comes in response to your phone calls to Jill Brierley and also to Stefan C.'s recent letter to the Findhorn Foundation.

"Kate, as you know, Jill and I have tried to work with the situation regarding your returning to Associate Membership within the Findhorn Foundation. Our recommendation to you was that it was not a good idea and yet you pursued the matter. We agreed to try and create a meeting with both Craig and Eric for you – and you agreed to this.

"I do not feel it is appropriate for the Foundation to create a forum for an open meeting and the Administration Group which coordinates the Foundation has also agreed with this.

"I also feel, now, it is inappropriate to create a meeting for you with Craig and Eric.

"As far as I am concerned our dealings with you are complete. I wish you well in your new venture.

Yours sincerely, Loren Stewart.
Focaliser of Personnel Administration Group."

On the same day as my receipt of the above, a further letter, delivered by hand, arrived from Gemma. In this she assumed I had received two letters, one from the Administration group and the other from Management, giving their separate decisions made at meetings held to discuss the issues arising from Stefan's letter. She continued:

"I had a 'new members' interview (we all did) on Tuesday morning, and I thought it was suspicious when I found out that mine was to be with Andrew and Loren. Naturally, only part of the interview was about CAP, the rest about the Admin. Group's decision and where I stood 'in the Foundation' in relation to this. I only realised where Loren's questions were 'coming from' when he eventually told me that Admin. Group had met to discuss the situation.* He just said they had decided that there would be no meeting of any kind, and that as far as he was concerned the 'curtain had been brought down on the subject' and that you had been informed. I was so shocked by this – that it had all happened and been decided, that I closed up and didn't ask him about the meeting or vent my anger at the injustice of the situation. Before this he had been probing me to find out where I stood on this issue and I spoke of my deep concern, as a member, at how this situation had arisen and wasn't being dealt with straightforwardly, and that to me it represented wrongs within the Foundation itself, as a whole, and my concern about this . . . it seemed he was asking me to make a decision, and I felt I would have to leave on the spot. He said I hadn't been 'fully present' lately within the Foundation, and this would have to be rectified, implying heavily to me that I had to fully align with the Foundation and drop all the issue around the unsubstantiated remarks about you, or leave . . . I felt this matter was not finished yet and just said I needed time. But he knew exactly where I stood, and that I could not align myself with the Foundation, particularly after the decision they had made, and that, in effect, they had fully supported Eric.

"Later on I heard that Management had also met to discuss this, and Marilyn Kennedy (the Cluny focaliser) said they certainly would look at the situation. Afterwards she wouldn't say to me what the outcome was, just saying I would be informed. Other people I worked with felt something positive in this, but I found out later that Eric was part of the meeting, so the result would be the same, obviously. There is a tiny bit in this week's *Rainbow Bridge* just saying the meeting had happened and you had been sent a letter. I went back to Marilyn saying obviously a decision had been made,

*This group was comprised of Loren Stewart, Judith Bone (acting Director), Alex Walker (Trustee) and three other persons, two of whom were not known to me.

and asking when would I be informed? She said there would be a meeting between myself and Eric. When this still didn't happen, I asked her again. She said she didn't want to be involved at all and it was up to Eric to talk to me. This time she said the meeting was in fact just a courtesy meeting, whatever that means. So I have been waiting for this to happen. I saw Eric twice and he made no move to speak to me, so I asked him when this meeting would be. He said he had not asked for a meeting as he felt he had nothing to 'clear' with me, so I said I *did* want a meeting – I don't know when this will be, he hasn't let me know. I have also contacted Loren to ask to see him too, but have not heard yet when this might occur. It has made me really angry at the injustice of the situation, and at my powerlessness to push this matter through. I feel in a very unsatisfactory position at the moment. Also, people generally won't know that the decision has been made, whether they have any interest or not. I feel I should write another letter putting the whole situation down in detail, and what it means in a wider sense to me, to be distributed – I don't know what else to do.

"I saw Stan Stanfield (a senior staff member); he wanted to know the sequence of events and I put the necessary points to him. He felt the situation was 'unfortunate' and that it had been caused by misunderstandings on both sides, regardless of the facts. He said he had neither the time nor the energy to become involved in this issue, just as Marilyn had said. . . . When I had time to look over it all again I felt the anger rise up in me at the injustice of the situation. . . . I saw the whole thing in a flash, with what Eric represented and the people involved making the choice to align themselves with him and what he represented. I also saw the series of implications of what they had done – though this isn't clear now. Seeing these things caused two huge impacts in me. I had all this emotion and nowhere to direct it.

"I feel this whole thing is hanging there, unresolved and unfinished whatever the two group meetings have said, and that it can't be left. But I don't know what to do."

The following day, Stefan arranged to see Gemma and to show her the letter sent to me by Loren. She had still not been informed of its content, and appeared very shocked and distraught when she read it. The end result was a scene in the Cluny Hill College dining room in which Eric Franciscus again declined to speak with Gemma, and she released her stress by slapping his face and publicly pouring out what she thought of him. She then drove over to the Park at Findhorn and insisted on seeing Eileen Caddy, to whom, in great distress, she communicated what had just happened, and asked why Eileen had done nothing at any step to correct this situation. Eileen listened but

gave no explanation. She merely said she thought Gemma was unsuited to the Foundation, and took the attitude that if she was unhappy, she should leave. Her complete lack of concern regarding the facts of this matter upset Gemma even more. She telephoned me on her return to Cluny Hill College in a state bordering on collapse. I immediately contacted Janice, a retired medical practitioner, who at once went to Gemma and took her back home with her. The next morning Gemma returned to the College to collect her belongings, then left for the home of her parents, relinquishing her Foundation membership.

As a consequence of these events, on September 14th Janice herself wrote to Loren, a very long letter which, in fact, she did not send. Another, more concise version, was sent in its stead. This read as follows:

"Dear Loren,

As one of a number of professional persons who attended the Cambridge Research Centre's seminars and courses under the directorship of Kate Thomas, I would like to express a very strong protest against the defamation of character consistently perpetrated against Kate by senior staff members of the Findhorn Foundation.

"I must also strongly protest, as a medical practitioner, at the extreme stress suffered by Gemma W—— through the prolonged and non-confrontational tactics used to evade her legitimate questioning of the defamatory remarks aforementioned, and specifically those made to her personally by Eric Franciscus, whom you have all supported despite his clearly untruthful accounts of what actually transpired. Such tactics are known to all sociologists and are fully documented in research material on group and cult behaviour. I took Gemma to my own home on Friday evening as she was obviously suffering acute shock and emotional stress as a result of her further approach to both Eric Franciscus and Eileen Caddy on learning of the content of your irrational and dismissive letter to Kate Thomas. What you have collectively subjected this young woman to (and I include Eileen Caddy) is an infringement of the basic human rights which one would justifiably expect to operate in your organisation, made infinitely worse, in my opinion, by the fact that you purport to promote spiritual values, inner development, unbiased attitudes and unconditional love. I therefore question your rights to publicise yourselves in this unsubstantiated manner.

"As a long-standing member of the Scientific and Medical Network and other research bodies, I consider the matter serious enough to take further. I would appreciate your comments by letter on these issues before I do so. In my view, apologies to Kate

Thomas and Gemma W—— are in the first order of priorities, and I suggest you set this immediately in motion.

Yours very sincerely, Janice D."

Copies of this letter were circulated to six senior staff focalisers in the Findhorn Foundation. These included Judith Bone, acting Director; Alex Walker (Trustee); Liz Whittam, CAP co-focaliser; Tim Hildebrandt, overall Park focaliser, and Marilyn Kennedy, overall focaliser of Cluny Hill College. Not one of the six responded.

Finally, from Gemma came a copy of the letter she had written personally to Loren, copies of which she had also sent to Eileen Caddy and several others. It was dated September 17th 1991:

"Dear Loren,

As you presumably know, I gave up membership of the Findhorn Foundation and have left Cluny. The following is my final word on this matter and expresses my disgust at the deplorable lack of concern to properly clear Kate Thomas's name of the lies that were perpetuated by certain members of the Foundation.

"In the letter I originally sent to Eric I said, 'If you won't 'hear' me on this, what do I have to do to be heard? To me this is a matter of principle that has been grossly flaunted. It cannot be left unchallenged. What is wrong is wrong, whichever way one tries to look at it.' If Stefan's letter seemed hard-hitting* and my actions appeared excessive, it was merely the measure of our individual feelings that the issue regarding Kate that had full justification to be looked at and dealt with, in an open and fair manner, was continually 'swept under the carpet' with no adequate reason given. My actions in the dining room at Cluny with Eric last Friday no doubt seemed extreme, but I had been left with no alternative, no outlet to express my deepest feelings of concern and anger after it had been decided that nothing would be done, no meetings would now be held.

"Stefan's efforts and my own to suggest an open meeting to finally clear this matter once and for all were blocked. Nor has Eric been brought to account for his lies. The very least *he* should do is to apologise to Kate herself. This appalling state of affairs and attitudes needed to be brought to people's attention – what is done (or not done) in the name of the Foundation and how the senior representatives conduct *themselves*, who are answerable to no-one. What I saw when dealing with Eric was that he was virtually a law unto himself, and had no concern whatsoever that Kate's name be cleared. How can I in all honesty align myself with people who conduct themselves in this manner, and who drove me to extreme action to make my concerns be heard and to bring it out into the open and to

*In Stefan's view, his circulated letter was very mild, and he had exercised considerable restraint when writing it.

the attention of others. It has been through my tenacity, and Stefan's, that any of this has been brought into the open. Now, hopefully, others will seriously question what goes on 'behind the scenes,' and question the motives and integrity of those who will lead the Foundation into the future.

"This experience has destroyed my confidence in the integrity and reputation of all who I dealt with; you have certainly opened my eyes. And this is what is called a 'spiritual community.' You are the ones who speak so freely of 'unconditional love' and 'living through spirit.' If you listen to your own cliches, then how does this whole situation 'mirror' the attitudes and parts you have all played? That really is a question that should seriously be asked.

"Kate has done nothing wrong, and yet the good people of the Foundation have done nothing to uphold this and put things right. Even if you believed that her 'energies' were incompatible with the Foundation, in all decency and straightforwardness her name should still have been cleared. It is a sad indictment on the much vaunted integrity of the Foundation that this situation should have existed in the first place. As a place of 'demonstration,' so often cited, what has actually been demonstrated here? That is another question worth serious consideration. I joined the Foundation in all faith that good values would prevail. What I have experienced forces the questions – what does it really stand for, what does it really uphold? Whatever your personal feelings may have been about the issue around Kate Thomas, it was still your duty to see that right was done. Then this could have been cleared for *everyone's* sake.

"I will now never support the Foundation, erroneously calling itself spiritual, and which, as I have seen, itself lives a lie. Yours, Gemma W."

On October 1st Janice received a reply to her letter. It was carefully worded and bore the inscription WITHOUT PREJUDICE in capital letters at the head of the page. The content was wholly unyielding:

"I have received your letter of September 14th, 1991. I regret that you have come to these conclusions about our organisation.

"As I have stated in my letter to Kate Thomas, September 9th, there is nothing more that the Foundation feels it can, or should do.

"I wish you, Gemma and Kate well in your future work.

Yours sincerely, Loren H. Stewart."

Thus ended my relationship with the Findhorn Foundation. I had hoped for something different, but the climax was not a surprise. I had already experienced the averted heads and "cutting dead" in the street by certain Foundation members in the week preceding. I do not know what they thought I had done, but they treated me like a criminal.

On October 7th, a letter was written to me by Gemma which

contained a full report of the foregoing episode, running to eighteen foolscap pages, and dating from early July. Several days later she sent a briefer version to Stefan, differently worded, but giving the same facts. I include here some excerpts from both communications, as they have the advantage of her personal viewpoint in retrospect. The first quotes are taken from her letter to Stefan:

". . . In all my dealings with Loren, he continually avoided the actual issue itself. He kept stressing the associate membership, rather than what it was really all about. It was only when the question of an open meeting was put to him – when he couldn't avoid it, that he said, no. And he didn't then, or at any other time, give me a good, concrete reason why, except that he thought it could cause a blaze.

". . . People like Stan and Marilyn were quite happy to listen, but told me they didn't want to be involved. . . . They both had a great deal of 'investment' in the place and the people. They were safe, in effect."

". . . Even though people had told me how awful Eric is, no-one was prepared to stand up against him. He has his finger in so many pies, to the annoyance, through his interference, of those departments. At 'family' meetings he always has a lot to say, and was extremely annoyed when decisions were made and he hadn't been consulted, even over things which didn't involve him. Eric focalises an inordinate amount of projects. I was told that you can't have a discussion with him without being given all his ideology, and the only way to deal with him is to walk away.

"In members, generally, I found a surprising level of inertia. As long as they themselves were alright, people didn't seem to be particularly interested in any other concerns, however they may reflect upon the Foundation, and whatever effect they may have on individuals. I was told by two people just to accept the situation, and act lovingly. As you know, there are things that the Foundation strongly promotes and which people do accept and use unquestioningly. The fact that it makes people very passive and malleable, again isn't questioned. People accept all the catchphrases and use them without thinking about what they mean.

"When I spoke to Eric that first time he acted as though he were invincible. He could say anything, and to whatever I said in return, he replied – so what? I tried to show people (individuals) that by what had happened he *was* invincible, and was protected, as well, by the likes of Loren and Marilyn, and tried to show what this actually meant. No-one wanted to grasp this.

"What I didn't expect was that virtually no-one, and particularly anyone in authority, was willing to sit down with me and openly discuss or try to understrand that there is something very wrong in

the way Kate was treated, and that untruths were freely put about, and that the Foundation was unwilling to deal with this and in fact blocked it, and me, all the way along. Because they blocked me so consistently, I can only think they have an awful lot to conceal."

I believe it needs to be borne in mind that the persons referred to above all hold senior staff positions within the Findhorn Foundation, and shape its policy. They have full responsibility for the tuition of incoming members, and of what this tuition consists. Eric Franciscus, in particular, as head of Education Branch, has a major say in what is on offer. This man has spent thirteen years as a resident member of the Foundation, and has the status of a long-term authority figure.

The following excerpts are from Gemma's letter to myself:

". . . After you told me that Jill Brierley had said that Eric vetoed your proposed associate membership, I felt it was in order to ask Eric why, and had no idea I would receive the response from him that I got. When I asked to speak to him he said we could talk right away, which was the only time he did this. Every other time he continually 'played games' as I saw it. As you know, he was quite open and spoke freely about his attitude regarding you, probably thinking I was quite 'tame.' I was shocked by what he said, and anything I said in reply, such as that what he was saying bore no resemblance to the person I knew, made no impression on him whatsoever, it didn't penetrate at all. Presumably because he has been allowed to get away with anything he chooses, and was probably never seriously challenged. And still isn't by the majority of people there. He had an air of invincibility. I hadn't known before where he stood in regard to how he saw the future of the Foundation – to it being highly regarded and commercially successful, calling himself an entrepreneur. In a way this seemed to be reflected in his attitude when he focalised maintenance, where the projects he promoted, like spending over a year converting the pavilion etc., were done at the expense of unseen but necessary work, like on the roofs which are falling to bits seriously, and the extensive dry rot.

"It is difficult to describe the impression I got when I spoke with him that time, other than it left me feeling sick and shocked and grieved, not only because of his attitude to you, but because of his attitude to what the Foundation was, and more specifically, what it would become, and his place in it and the part he played. It was all so *un*spiritual, so lacking in integrity, so controlled by manipulation on various levels, and with absolutely no desire to change this.

"When I tried to get back to him, he played games with me all the time, such as disappearing when he said he would be there; and when I cornered him, in no way being helpful or speaking unless I spoke to him. I could see what he was doing, and it infuriated me so much that

I felt I had to get through to him somehow, and the only way was by letter. I believe the only reason he spoke to me after reading the letter was because he didn't know who else had received a copy, otherwise I feel certain he would have ignored it."

Relating to the fateful Friday evening aforementioned, Gemma wrote:

"When I got back to Cluny, Eric was still in the dining room as well as many other people. I wasn't sure if this was the right moment to confront him, but I felt that to wait would lose an opportunity and I may not have another chance. I was thinking this as I got a cup of coffee, so I walked right up to him and in my anger slammed the cup of coffee down onto the table in front of him, it went everywhere. I said, 'When are you going to give me an interview,' to which he said he didn't think this was the time or the place to discuss this. I just let go and shouted at him my feelings about how he had handled the situation all along and called him a liar and a deceiver. He got up to go, so I pulled him back and continued. I can't remember exactly what I said, I just let what came out come. I then struck him across the face. He said nothing through all this, just turned and walked out. I then turned back to the room and shouted that they had all stood behind that man and supported him by their actions of not doing or saying anything, that no-one had taken the time to look at something that was important, and I said how I saw this reflected on the Foundation as a whole. Andrew Shorrock (the CAP focaliser) by this time was beside me and said something like – hadn't I said enough, dear. I just turned round and walked out and got my coat.

". . . I drove straight over to see Eileen. She happened to be at home . . . She said that she didn't realise that I even knew you, so if she had read Stefan's letter she hadn't associated my name with me. She thought I only wanted to see her about Ann (the woman who called herself a witch to whom she had given an interview, who afterwards bombarded her, and others, with letters from Glastonbury). I asked why had she done nothing in response to Stefan's letter, why had she not questioned things or spoken up or shown any interest? She seemed completely unconcerned and uninterested, just saying she had met you and you seemed very nice, and kept saying that the Foundation obviously wasn't for me. It is one thing not to know (although she had received a copy of Stefan's letter), it is another to not want to know, and I felt she didn't want to know at all."

Following her visit to the dismissive and evasive Eileen Caddy, Gemma went on to confront Loren:

". . . I happened to remember his phone number and by chance had some money in my pocket. For the first time ever, he actually

answered the phone. He had heard what had happened in the dining room at Cluny having rung there coincidentally, and no he hadn't time to see me as he was about to leave for the kitchen to prepare food for a wedding. So I knew where he would be. When I got there he wasn't in the kitchen but I thought I saw him walking away at the end of the road. I followed but lost him, yet I knew that if it was him, he would be back. So I waited, and in about five minutes he returned with his case of knives. I stopped him and said that the importance he preferred to give to the wedding was proof to me of his wrong perspective. He said the issue regarding you had little importance to him. I then shouted my anger and frustration at how this whole thing had been handled, and why had they not seen fit to do the right thing and deal with it properly, fairly and openly. I can't remember what more. Nor can I remember what he said – nothing new anyway. And even though I put my full force behind what I said, it had no effect on him. He then turned and walked away. I didn't feel there was anything more I could do or say to him.

". . . At Janice's I felt so tired, yet I couldn't sleep properly, with images and dreams going round in my head all the time. I felt totally shattered the next day and was grateful for your message that I should pack and leave as soon as possible. . . . Andrew (Shorrock) asked if I would have a word with him and Liz Whittam (the wife of Alec), so I said I would. I told him what I thought of him and how incompetent I felt he had been with the CAP group, which was true. I explained my feelings over how they had handled the situation regarding yourself, and how there had seemed no real concern or desire to do the right thing and substantiate what had been said about you and propagated without seeming opposition. I also said how this reflected on the Foundation itself, and from the total of what I had seen and experienced I could in no way go along with it, or support it, or them, in any way. Andrew wanted to 'tune us out' but I said it seemed a charade under the circumstances and left to finish packing."

Later in the letter, Gemma reported: "For the first week at my father's I felt unwell . . . I then wrote a letter to Loren, though with great difficulty. I circulated several copies, including one to Eileen Caddy . . . but so far, I have had no reply from anyone. How can people get away with these things as Loren and Eric and all the others have done, and be in no way answerable?"

In view of Eric's non-sharing and totalitarian attitude towards Gemma, it is that much less convincing to find him advertised as a focaliser in a project that emphasizes: "A commitment to one's own spiritual growth as well as a willingness to share about it and to support others in their growth is essential." This statement comes

from the September 1991 – April 1992 Guest Programme of the Foundation, which describes (p. 27) a seven-week tour of India to be conducted by Eric and two other members of the Foundation this coming December. The tour is stated to be "designed as an inner adventure as well as an outer journey," and the result "of many requests to experience the treasures of Mother India in the safe setting of a group" (p. 27). One hopes that everyone will be more safely supported than Gemma was in the sharing she was so coldly and consistently denied. Significantly perhaps, the only two places that are specifically mentioned in the itinerary of this tour are the Satya Sai Baba Ashram and the Auroville Community (connected with Shri Aurobindo). Eric's major inspiration is known to be Satya Sai Baba. Perhaps the fee of £2,500 specified for this tour will encourage Eric's entrepreneurial disposition in a more sharing and supportive direction than he has exhibited on his home territory.

To conclude, I must clearly state that my reason for rescinding my application for associate or any other form of membership (which written rescission Loren chose to ignore in his letter to me of September 9th) was not solely through the antagonism of others. It arose from far more serious factors with which I knew I could find no basis of compromise. These factors I can in no sense equate with the work of interior growth with which the Findhorn Foundation professes to be concerned.

Among the changes current within the Foundation is the total reorganisation of the Phoenix Centre, the bookstore and craft shop central to the Park precincts, and now under new management; and it was to the "Phoenix" I ventured one morning in late July to purchase a book and to view the advertised transformation.

Changes there certainly were, but I am not convinced for the better. On prominent display, to my amazement, were *even more* books and meditation cassettes by Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh – the scandal in America and his enforced expulsion from that country apparently ignored as of no consequence. *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley* was also displayed, along with a vast collection of assorted Tarot decks and other divinatory systems, among them the Rajneesh Neo Tarot, and including the infamous Crowley pack used by all "black" practitioners throughout the West, and which I had strongly protested against before.

The therapy section contained virtually every therapy under the sun, no matter how dubious, unproven, or rabidly commercial, with no attempt at all at selectivity. This likewise applied to an extensively stocked section on sex in all its forms, aspects and variations, including Tantric sex and eroticism. A large display rack carried a wide range of New Age magazines, and tucked behind "Link-Up," in

true newspaper shop fashion, were a stack of "Yellow Silk" Erotic Art journals replete with Edwardian-style nudes and blatantly pornographic titillation, something the former management of the bookshop, at least, had not entertained.

From the shop noticeboard immediately confronting each visitor as they enter the foyer, I learned that "Gay, Lesbian and Bi-sexual awareness meetings" were now on offer each week – this regular facility proclaiming an obvious increase in interest and attendance, such as I had foreseen. This is hardly surprising in view of the letter printed in *Rainbow Bridge* of the previous August written by a male staff member* and containing the following:

"Two months ago, I had a three-week relationship with a young man. It was my first happy and successful relationship, the first time I had sex with a man, the first time I enjoyed sex, the first time I discovered in me treasures of love and tenderness to give freely . . . I feel a much better person for it – even if today I am struggling with a major shift in all my values, looking for additional experiences including casual homosexual sex, though my preference would naturally be a long-term relationship. I do not share this here to shock you, but only because it helps me admitting to myself that I am gay – I am actually trembling as I type this, with tears coming into my eyes . . . But I am glad that at last I am 'coming out.'" (This man had previously shown no sign of homosexual tendencies and had recently been rejected in a relationship with a woman having a much stronger personality than his own. He perhaps fell victim to a readily available commodity well-advertised on every noticeboard in the community. This does not, of course, excuse his "advertisement" for casual sex, particularly in view of his already responsible staff position within the Findhorn Foundation).

However pleasant, harmless, and innocent the Crafts aspect of the Phoenix Centre still remains, there is no doubt at all that the central emphasis of the bookshop has changed for the worse, and its prime interest is commercial and wholly without integrity in relation to its original purpose of supplying the needs of seekers and aspirants.

For a supposedly "spiritual" organisation concerned with the process of "planetary development" and inner growth to support, *and encourage*, the spread of Reichian orgasm-based therapy and an overt preoccupation with eroticism, the superstitions of divination, the activities of sadistic magicians, and the "meditations" of a highly permissive cult leader (Rajneesh) whose methods nurtured terrorism is, to say the least, totally reprehensible and irresponsible. To sponsor sensualism and to actively stimulate all forms of sexual interest in regularly meditating aspirants, makes evident to all

*Thierry Bogliolo. This man has since been given a managerial position.

concerned that the Findhorn Foundation has rejected utterly the traditional disciplines and values of all authentic teachings. It is my contention that without such disciplines and the resultant *essential* safeguards, the evolutionary *necessity* of inner growth can never be accomplished, *nor even begun*.

* * *

The Findhorn Foundation has long been registered as an Educational Trust and a charitable institution. Cluny Hill College, purchased in 1975, is a recognised international establishment for all-year-round courses. The Foundation has therefore achieved recognition for its founders and its programmes over a considerable period of time. Like the Wrekin Trust with which it has strong affiliations, it rode the wave of popular interest through the hippy boom of the late sixties and early seventies and emerged with a reputation for progressive esotericism. The material disseminated at its conferences and courses, much of it imported from the U.S.A. and such centres as the Esalen Institute, has infiltrated and influenced a whole level of society under the non-critical aegis of the New Age movement, of which it is the undisputed spearhead. This, in turn, is gradually forming a new cultural pattern which is supplanting the Christian religion that, for all its faults, once provided a moral background for our Western civilisation. (I have no dispute with Christian morals, only with Christian dogmatism and the immorality of some Christian clergymen).

I believe that this issue merits the attention of all serious thinkers and educators, particularly those concerned with the development of man's hidden evolutionary potential, now long overdue. For what is actually being promoted by the Foundation on an ever widening scale is in no sense soundly based, and will sidetrack all those who become ensnared by it. If the content of this book has any validity, then the Findhorn Foundation *has not*, for through its leaders it has repudiated utterly the principles on which the book stands, namely the requirements of specialised training for all stages of inner development – a repudiation furthered by the New Age movement at whatever point it is contacted.

What the entire movement is doing, at best, is unevenly preparing a climate for change by familiarising a wide spectrum of people with current trends of thought culled from the more popular findings of science and psychology. But the good that is done is far outstripped by the harm, and this is increasingly so. The indiscriminate introduction of techniques and practices derived from many sources has distorted the original impetus, rendering null and void the possibilities once inherent in this experiment that could have served humans but can

now only damage them. These extraneous embellishments of the underlying stream are drawn from the fields of psychotherapy, neo-Reichian Gestalt, transpersonal psychology, Jungian analysis, psychosynthesis, life training programmes, encounter groups, enlightenment intensives, NLP (neuro linguistic programming), the Silva method, auto-suggestion and self-hypnosis, to name but a few. To these are added the debased offshoots of Tantra; the ritual practices of an outmoded Tibetan Buddhism; debased versions of Zen Buddhism; Kundalini Yoga; the rituals of sweat lodges, shamanism and other isms, including voodoo, all of which are beginning to make their mark on hundreds of small groups and centres throughout the West. These embellishments and distractions are frequently incorporated in ignorance of what they essentially *are*. Some are employed under the guise of modern therapies like Gestalt, for example; others reflect the increasing preoccupation with the occult and with a primitive sympathetic magic, none of which is taken sufficiently seriously in terms of its consequences.

This hotch potch of immensely potent techniques produces gratifyingly immediate results in terms of emotional release and other sensational bonuses, but in the charge of those lacking insight and expertise (or plain commonsense), can activate various acute subconscious problems which, once triggered, cannot easily be remedied. Equally fraught with suffering is the abnormal development induced by the use of powerful techniques, such as shamanic rituals and chants originally designed to facilitate entry into other dimensions of experience. People using these ancient, and less ancient, formulae have seemingly no idea of what they are initiating, or even that they are using such instrumentation at all. The lopsided development that can result from unrestrained dabbling renders impossible any form of evolutionary growth until corrected, and this requires a specialist attention not instantly available on demand.

What I witnessed at the Findhorn Foundation consolidated my conviction of the dangers inherent in such practices. Here, the inexperienced, the insensitive, and sometimes the unstable, are given free licence as focalisers to initiate processes that have complex effects, both short term and long term, on the minds and psychologies of others – effects that can cause enormous distress and lasting damage. It is like placing an assortment of potent drugs in the hands of a child, to administer as and when he chooses and without any screening of the recipients as to their suitability, stability, or need, and with little or no knowledge of the probable outcome. Their only qualification for this work is that they are *members* of the Foundation. This unethical practice would be forbidden and *punishable* in any reputable profession, yet is wholly without restriction in the

areas indicated. Doctors have been struck off the register for the medical equivalent of what is here being done to the mind. I cannot emphasise sufficiently strongly the heedlessness and irresponsibility of most so-called New Age *authorities* who purport to have knowledge but in actual fact have only a basic psychism, and sometimes not even that.

The New Age movement is a sham and not what it pretends to be. It has settled for secondary values that yield prestige, power, and a comfortable lifestyle. It presents as tools for spiritual advancement the therapies designed for the emotionally unbalanced, the socially unintegrated, the mentally disturbed. It uses conditioning techniques to engender a false sense of wellbeing. It confuses the abundant creative energies of nature with the living organic stimulus utilised by authentic, experiential schools of evolutionary development. It embraces a variety of mental gymnastics that strengthen the ego rather than diminishing it. It makes accessible certain breathing exercises and sonic *mantras* that were originally devised to awaken the dynamic force of *kundalini*. It is concerned increasingly with assertiveness training, self-esteem, sexual fulfilment, the use of manipulative mental techniques in business, subliminal indoctrination, and the masculinisation of women.

This situation endures through lack of education and due specialisation. The leaders and teachers of the New Age movement are all too often ignorant, deluded, and inept. They have no legitimate authorisation for what they assert they can do, and their advertised courses are therefore counterfeit – they will not generate one iota of spiritual growth. Psychic experience alone does not make a teacher. Nor do assertions about healing, unconditional love, or inner guidance. The ability to evoke emotional release in others via the use of techniques is entirely inconsequential, and save for its questionable value as a therapy for repression and inadequacy, does not merit the acclaim it is given. These "teachers" are playing with human life and are breaking the rules laid down through the ages.

Forres, Scotland.
November 1991

CHAPTER 15

The Dangers of Narcissism

Having been censored by the leading New Age community in Europe, and acutely misrepresented in the process, perhaps I may here be allowed to speak my mind to a more literate stratum of society on a more democratic basis than unconditional love will permit. I will attempt to be brief, as this is already a long book.

I am rather tired of observing nominally spiritual communities. For over thirty years, I have noticed repeatedly that such organisations do not live up to their professed ideals. However, the situation is far worse now than it was in the 1950's, and it was very far from being ideal even then.

There were many minority trends of the 1950's and 1960's which have since been smothered by the permissive degeneracy that mushroomed during the hippy boom. These earlier trends focussed variously on Eastern mysticism, Western psychism, and so forth, and were frequently very diffuse and inadequate vehicles. Yet they were superior in their motivation, despite their limited concepts, to the subsequent New Age wave which obscured the quest for spiritual priorities. The New Age entrepreneurs have demonstrated a preoccupation with nurturing the human ego, not in sublimating it (despite their statements to the contrary). Their heroes have notably included the questionable Wilhelm Reich, whose sex-obsessed mentality exercised a disastrous influence. New Age entrepreneurs have captured large markets, and vary from book distributors who sell vast numbers of "sex and magic" books, to the many "workshop" therapists who arrange expensive courses and take advantage of hardworking people. Workshop entrepreneurs pass muster as "experts"; they certainly gain the limelight and a profitable

livelihood. It is no wonder that sociologists have described the New Age movement in terms of narcissism, a critical assessment with which I agree thoroughly, though I do not share the conceptual framework of some of the critics.

For purposes of this chapter, my definition of the word narcissism extends to that of an uncurbed egotism and self-love that is so averse to (constructive) criticism that it will actively suppress a non-hostile critic in the most undemocratic manner, even to the point of slander, in evident fear of a rival. It is much easier to object to such totalitarian policy in the face of the declared auspices of unconditional love. The inability to acknowledge, or even to investigate, a differing point of view (politely proffered), is its own proof of an inflexible standpoint that deems itself perfect. Perhaps that is even worse than dogmatism.

In my experience, the social scientists are also correct about the "indoctrination and brainwashing" that has been discerned to occur in New Age and related "spiritual" groupings. In too many organisations, nobody will stand out as an independent conscience against wrongs they know to be occurring within their community. This is not the hallmark of spiritual perception, but of bondage to organisational ideology and authority figures invested with significance accordingly. The brain-washing may not be obvious, but it effectively exists with regard to criticisms of the elite, criticisms which are taboo and treated as heinous crimes.

The New Age is a hybrid of doubtful groupings, cults, and organisations. The seemingly responsible voice of some organisations can be strongly questioned. The sad and dangerous consequence of the trend as a whole is that the resultant composite of therapy and presumed "spirituality" is now finding acceptance as a body of knowledge, and furthermore, one which is openly proclaimed to be expertise in the realm of the psyche. In actuality, it is only an excursion into the realm of the narcissistic psyche, which has nothing to do with spirituality.

A number of persons in the New Age movement are drop-outs and related categories left over from the hippy era of the sixties and seventies. Reared on a diet of drugs and free love, they found unexpected and unmerited status as exponents of fringe ideas and therapies which were increasingly dispensed to the general public in the name of spiritual education. What this amounts to is alternative therapy and alternative belief, not spirituality. Some attempts to protest at this situation have been strongly suppressed, and under the auspices of charitable status.

One of the reasons why the New Age has gained credence more rapidly that otherwise might have been possible is the deference paid

by spokesmen to the ecological drive. This is usually conducted by persons other than therapists, and is now a very popular cause. But it is not equivalent to spirituality, despite the undoubted relevance of ecology to world problems.

From the standpoint of belief in an inner growth, it is possible to strongly assert that exposure to "techniques" widely used in "workshops" is detrimental to such growth, because the psychology can be damaged or malformed as a consequence. Such techniques breed self-deception, greed, excessive emotion, and even violence. They are generally accompanied by an aversion to anything "intellectual," e.g., written work and self-analysis. Such techniques have nothing whatsoever to do with "spiritual education," despite the advertisements of certain influential organisations. Attempts to express such a critical viewpoint, from the perspective of an inner growth, are met with suppression, defamation of character, and even personal threat (as in the case of one of my students mentioned in the previous chapter).

The permissive attitude towards Crowleyana (literature and accessories associated with Aleister Crowley) promoted by some New Age centres reflects the irresponsibility of the governing authority figures. This in the face of ventures like "Childwatch" which have attempted to urgently point out the increasing involvement of children in practices termed "black magic" and witchcraft (brought home to many people as early as November 1st 1988, when coverage was given by the six o'clock news on BBC 1 television). Children have not merely suffered shock and fear through such involvement, but have been procured by magical groups and abused. There have even been murders reported in relation to such groups, for whom Crowleyana is a prime fuel and goad. Magical accoutrements are big business in some New Age sectors, and there are worse things on sale than ouija boards.

When even the most obvious forms of sadistic violence are ignored and pardoned by the vogue of "unconditional love," it is evident that it is impossible to communicate more intangible dangers. It is my contention that the energies utilised in what is known as sorcery, magic, or witchcraft, are not imaginary, at least in a fair number of cases. Such energies can be utilised by the unscrupulous, and should never be treated lightly. People who allow themselves to be drawn into dubious rituals and groupings are asking for trouble. The artificial heightening of emotion is a veritable Pandora's box. When manipulated with intent to harm, such energies are not performing the "work of the devil" as believed in former centuries, but are very much the work of humans behaving devilishly of their own choice.

The commercial New Age delights in the decadence of the present human culture, which it exploits to the full in communes, semi-communes, and endorsements of witchcraft and ritual magic. Doubtless it will soon extend tolerance to the paedophiles who murder children while making horrific videos – and it is relatively easy to do this under the influence of Aleister Crowley and satanism.

The account of my 1977 experience was never read by the Findhorn Foundation, or any other New Age body. I have decided to release it in this book as testimony to my own perspective. The experience inevitably affected me deeply. It superceded all my previous concepts, of whatever nature. I do not claim it as being any ultimate perspective, though I believe it to be more accurate than the license of unconditional love, which so often amounts to organisational convenience.

One of the advantages of publishing (in chapter nine) this account, I hope, will be to make clear that my perspective is not that of fundamentalist religion. In some sectors, for instance, if one even dares to mention the dangers of AIDS, one is considered a fundamentalist. In the way that I saw the sexually transmitted disease described in chapter nine, it was *not* as any visitation of punishment as believed by Christian fundamentalists, but as a *preventable karmic consequence* incurred as a natural result of excessive promiscuity of a certain (bi-sexual) type. I saw that the immune system of victims could not be restored by any medical means; there was no cure for this disease, whatever it was. Yet no responsible person has to catch AIDS, and therefore one can be full of optimism.

I have doubtless used the word *karma* a great deal in this book. This is because I have not been able to find a more satisfactory word of simple and convenient rendition. I can only speak from my own experience; unlike the lawsuits of this modern world, nobody escapes the consequence of any kind of action in the real sphere of law that underlies our lives. There is nothing more scientifically exacting than the law of *karma*, however unscientifically this abused subject is at present described (and ignored) in New Age books. What many millions of people regard as divine retribution amounts only to the predictable consequence of past activities and behaviour, and is nothing to do with a wrathful Deity at all.

The narcissism of the New Age abuses such well known concepts as *karma*. Instead the therapists and counsellors prefer dictums like "Love Myself" (strongly associated with Eileen Caddy), a slogan singularly convenient for narcissists. I refuse to call it mysticism, as they imagine it to be. They do not create their own reality, only their own falsehood.

It really ought to be better known that criminals indulge in a form

of self-love, creating their own "reality" inimical to others with every crime they perpetrate. When people are not called to task for their horrendous behaviour, all too often – as the tabloids often reveal – the criminals do again what they did before, and perhaps to an even worse degree. They have not acquired conscience or altruism through suffering for their own transgressions. A misplaced liberalism currently affords singular leniency to criminals who do as they please in the absence of self-control and sufficient sentence.

Ego-trips flourish in the atmosphere of narcissism, including false guruism in all its forms. New Age workshops and courses do not produce enlightenment. Instead they predominantly produce fantasy, singularly resistant to self-discipline and self-analysis. Fantasy is currently encouraged as a form of excursion into the psyche. That is the easiest way to gain control of gullible people with a lot of money to spend. Such people also lose all options of inner development. The uncritical mind has no chance in today's climate of subliminal suggestion and "creating your own reality."

Many misplaced ideas in the New Age sphere are creating serious distortions of a nominally mystical nature. These distortions swiftly gain credence if they suit various sectors of the human community. Feminists are guilty of such distortions in an increasingly large measure. There is, for instance, a completely erroneous view that has recently gained much exposure and even support. I am referring to what is quaintly labelled "sacred prostitution," a prime contradiction in terms. This is a New Age aberration promoted by self-designated "liberated" women, usually intellectuals with an academic degree that gains them a hearing. I will here quote from the "blurb" of a book intent on furthering these dangerous ideas concerning the feminine principle. This write-up appeared, not long ago, in the distribution catalogue of "The Great Tradition" (based in America), in the section misleadingly advertised as "The Foundation Stages: Psychology":

> ". . . the author argues that in ancient times there was a deep connection between the sensual life of the body and the religious life of the spirit. Such a connection was obvious to people who respected the feminine principle, or the Goddess. The connection was clearly manifested in the sacred prostitute, who was to be pure in spirit at the same time that she welcomed strangers into her arms with a sensuous embrace. Her true function . . . was to bring the Goddess's love into effective contact with mankind. The author maintains that the connection between spirit and passion has in modern times become lost in the depths of the unconscious, leaving a broad sense of dissatisfaction and boredom in relationships. This book sets out to show how our capacity for true joy depends on restoring this body-spirit connection to consciousness."*

And from an American magazine comes the following:

> "The article is a serious and reasoned argument for a reinstatement of the holy prostitute as the conduit of the sacred. The author, however, does not simply have temple attendants in mind. She is advocating the role for all women as a means of sacralising the body and regaining spiritual power lost with the advent of patriarchal religion."**

This arrant nonsense can only be written in sheer ignorance. Human passion is in no sense bonded to the divine, it merely reflects it in a minute form; and the production of multiple orgasms in any mode of erotic love *cannot*, by its intrinsic nature, lead any individual towards a higher range of experience. In such higher states the human functions of sex are in abeyance. They cannot be linked, it is impossible. One type of event takes place in the transient physical mechanism, the other in a finer, non-physical vehicle. The interior self must transcend the bodily functions at the time of other-dimensional experience. There is a confusion here with debased forms of Tantra and various (unproven) theories in Western psychology. The "pure in spirit," meaning those who have achieved their spiritual completion, or nearly achieved this (i.e. the genuine "saints") do not engage in sexual prostitution in any form, on any level, for any purpose whatsoever; and *these*, if female, are the only members of the human race who are capable of imparting the "feminine principle" to those in need of it, and of annulling the "sins" or inadequacies of others, including sexual aberrations, and they do not use prostitution as a means to this.

The joys of the flesh are sweet but limited. To prolong them unduly

*This description relates to the book by Nancy Qualls-Corbett entitled *The Sacred Prostitute*. The blurb appears in the Spring/Summer 1989 catalogue of "*The Great Tradition,*" p. 46. This catalogue advertises many dubious books in the "commercial esoteric" category, admixed with some books that have a respectable reputation. "*The Great Tradition*" is a book distribution organisation associated with the name of Da Free John, a Western "guru" whom some believe should more accurately be described as an exploiter of "New Age" bathos.

**From an article by Robert J.L. Burrows in *Christianity Today*, reproduced in the *Utne Reader* (March – April 1987). Burrows was criticising an article by Deena Metzger which appeared in the *Utne Reader* entitled "Re-vamping the World: On the Return of the Holy Prostitute." Burrows observed that the response to Metzger's article was disturbing, since "although some objected strenuously, others unabashedly applauded." The same writer added that: "The New Age movement can provide no defense against this kind of blatant decadence," though it should be noted that the advocates of a new age (in the more demanding sense) strongly disagree with "New Age" degeneracy.

can create serious psychological patterns of obsession, and to amplify them by certain forms of erotic titillation takes sexual experience into areas for which it was not intended. Former eras knew all about the subtleties of eroticism. They also knew how to artificially induce the arousal of the "sacred fire" or *kundalini*, and the use of techniques of sublimation during sexual intercourse was one of the preliminary means sometimes effective in achieving this; but this is *illicit* activation, as are all occult "forced entries," for they are not aligned to the correct requirements for such experience, and incur serious problems. Mastery of one's own sexuality has always been a prerequisite of spiritual development, and those continually seeking sexual excitement and eroticism have certainly not mastered it. To take such discipline into the realm of sex for the purpose of acquiring power is a deviation that was all too common in past centuries, when control was first established through Yoga and Tantric practise (and their equivalents) and then applied to deliberate activation of the *kundalini*. Control of the sexual urge for this purpose was therefore not aligned to true development, as was likewise the case in many instances of Taoist Yoga. Long-term sexual problems resulted.

Certain purificatory practices, including meditation, can develop the will, and hence bestow immense willpower and even heightened states of awareness, but unless the will itself is surrendered to a higher principle, these techniques are useless for spiritual growth and can create the reverse, a developed mind that seeks to impose its own will for egoistic purposes – a mind concerned solely with gaining its own desires through means other than those operating in the physical world. In such a situation, the ego has merely transferred its focus of attention from the physical realm to the one above, where the ability to manipulate is magnified one hundredfold. Many gurus and occultists are located at this level of experience, which derives from intensive *chakra* activation giving premature access to the subtle realm (the lowest of the non-physical realms, and potentially dangerous). This hazardous access bequeaths tremendous magnetism and hypnotic force, and sometimes the ability to perform what are considered to be miracles. People flock to such occultists and believe them to be genuine teachers when they are, in fact, themselves trapped in the snares of a partial and inverted development, and far from "liberating" others, can only bind their followers to this same level of experience from which it is even more difficult to gain release than from the physical world. Such gurus and occult practitioners enmesh their followers in static pursuits and drain off the vitality and magnetism of their own pupils, an action for which there are very serious penalties, though these can take time to operate. Some also involve their pupils in tantric sexual "initiations" for reasons that

have nothing to do with spirituality. Many persons desiring sensation follow such people, which affords a test for genuine seekers. Man has been too clever in the past, and has found ways of obtaining power not rightfully his. When he *lawfully* gains this attribute he has gone beyond using it in sexual practices or for personal gain. These temptations then no longer exist. The body is transitory and simply a vehicle in which to attain higher consciousness – a crucible, no less. It can be rightly used or wrongly used. Physical sex in mundane life (in moderation) is one matter; but sexual desire fuelled by misplaced energies is an insatiable force that has brought thousands into ruin. Such appetites take over the entire mental horizon and eventually lead to satiation and degeneration, and attempts at "sacred prostitution" are no exception to this.

Only those with very strong wills reach the level that breeds the thoroughly magnetic Guru, and this is *an even worse state* than the one preceding, if people could but see the very severe karmic bindings involved.

Contemporary writers steeped in Jungian concepts and psychotherapy do not comprehend the mechanics of evolutionary development and tend to confuse the sacred with the profane. The Jungian version of archetypes is inaccurate, and is strongly implicated in the predilection for fantasy that is rampant amongst "therapists and counsellors."

Correct orientation is essential *before* interior growth begins. The will must be sublimated, and the ego can then be dealt with. Correct orientation is obtained in worldly life, and a sane, normal, hard-working, and sincere man or woman has far greater hope of evolutionary completion than egoistic deviants located on the subtle or "halfway" planes and wielding occult power. If more people understood this, they would conform more readily to the inherent patterns reflected from above to below throughout the kingdoms of nature. These patterns are archetypal and provide a blueprint for our growth, but the more vocal feminist trends we have in our midst are not allied to this, and have endorsed a promiscuity that is now lethal in society.

Too often the "liberated" woman is simply an assertive individual who has not only liberated herself from the bondage of men but also from womanhood in essence and the maternal instinct in particular. These women are not subordinate to men, but neither are they subordinate to anyone or anything, and most are simply apeing the opposite sex, taking as their models the most macho and egocentric. This could quite legitimately cause one to think that they had just emerged themselves from a cycle of male incarnations of this very type. Lesbians are a case in point. They have inverted the feminine

aspect of their own psychologies in much the same manner as homosexuals invert their masculine aspect. In the latter case, men become increasingly passive; in the former, women become markedly strident and unfeminine.

Lesbianism and homosexuality are the *inverse* of femininity and masculinity. They proceed from damaged psychologies and are aberrations in human development caused by various specific factors that require correction in the same way as all other human disorders. Many lesbians, for instance, have turned to other women through the psychological damage caused by the brutality of men. The root causes for these inversions are frequently complex, but they are *not*, as some people like to proclaim, symptomatic of becoming androgynous. This latter, uncomprehended state is entirely non-physical and unconnected to human sexuality.

Jungian therapists are the worst misrepresenters of these matters; not wilfully, perhaps, for Jung himself did not fully understand the mechanics of human psychology and spiritual development, and worked from a series of theories and hypotheses – as did Freud and others – and his adherents blindly accept his work as a body of sacrosanct knowledge despite the fact that they are themselves adding to the confusions all the time.

One such is Robert H. Hopcke, whose 1989 publication, *Jung, Jungians and Homosexuality,** posits the Androgyne theme in earnest. The fact that on page 1 he confesses himself as "gay" (and therefore has a vested interest in the matter) we are not to consider of consequence. He seeks to find archetypal reasons for the existence of homosexuality and to elevate it into an experience of inner growth. Whereas I have sympathy for certain types of homosexual, who differ in their tendencies (and some I have known very well), I feel that Hopcke very much defeats his own purpose by the crudely pornographic material he uses for his workshops – various "erotic stories" to use his own words, which many of his clients, both "gay and straight," (page 158) find offensive and disturbing. Having read his book, this does not surprise me. Any man who uses such cesspit imagery and language from the most degenerate of "gay" magazines, and inflicts "stories" concerned only with an extremity of abnormal and deviant behaviour on his readers (including such in-house delicacies as "bondage," group sex, and "raunch") to "prove" the masculinity of homosexuals (pages 161–169), cannot expect to be taken seriously even if he dredges the works and letters of the unfortunate Jung in their entirety. Hopcke is concerned with seeing homosexuality as "a

*Robert H. Hopcke, *Jung, Jungians and Homosexuality* (Boston & Shaftesbury: Shambhala, 1989).

positive individual phenomenon" and establishing it as an evolutionary norm, but the behaviour he cites is far from indicative of this. This behaviour, of course, pertains also to heterosexuals, though many people do not consider this proof of masculinity or femininity, but rather as symptoms of immaturity, unbridled desires, or incorrect growth. The problem here lies in non-understanding of the root causes of all forms of human deviance and aberration, and without real knowledge, all hypotheses are as likely to cloud solutions as to clarify them.

Throughout my adult life, as my autobiography indicates, I have frequently suffered suppression by men, but I am still totally convinced that male and female have mutually compatible, balanced functions which are manifest in sincere and considerate people. Nevertheless, these are *different* functions, and a woman's role is the care of her children if she opts to have them, and care of the man with whom she unites herself, just as his is to provide for, protect, and cherish those in his charge. These views are extremely unpopular in the West, as I know well. This does not, however, alter the laws underlying the whole of creation.

In breaking these laws we have a nation, indeed a world, of undisciplined, greedy, self-seeking egoists. The fault lies in individuals, not in the traditional masculine/feminine roles. Even in a matriarchal society, before its inevitable decline and distortion, women were *noble*, compassionate, caring – not man-eating Amazons with over-stimulated sexual appetites, as depicted by those who glibly reconstruct past civilisations from the point of their corruptive fall. A breed of "sacred prostitute" would have been quite sufficient to destroy any civilisation.

In a truly matriarchal culture, the rapists would be castrated and the child-abusers jailed for life. As it is, we have nations of "liberated" women who often neglect their children in pursuit of financial gain, who are surprisingly often content to live as prostitutes and semi-prostitutes, and whose sole advice to the young is often about as profound as: be permissive if you wish, but don't catch AIDS.

Some New Age enthusiasts speak glibly of a "Golden Age," and it is widely believed we are about to enter one at the end of this century. How they can reconcile this with the increasing and obvious deterioration and decline of our Western culture, I do not know. The general immersion in greed, violence, and obscenity, absorbed willingly by the populace as a whole (and to such an extent that massive fortunes are made by those peddling vice), is no basis for such illusory expectations. According to my own experience of these cyclical matters (in 1977), a large number of complacent New Age

enthusiasts and others are in for a shock in terms of retrograde karmic patterns.

As I saw it, there will be a drastic reduction of the population on this planet in the next few centuries. As I saw it, at the commencement of the time cycle which is just ending, it was *literally* possible for individual freewill to select one route, or another (of lesser quality), as life unfolded in the earlier phases of the era. But at this twelfth hour, only a form of *interior choice* remains, since the predispositioning karmic patterns are already formed – and in most cases, set and crystallized. This is a very complex subject, impossible to briefly define, but one aspect of it boils down to the situation that, although a mechanical pattern has been fixed by individual and collective initiative, this can be modified on certain wavelengths by an intensive form of constructive effort and conscience. By interior choice, I mean the will and wish to do what is correct in any given situation, however restrictive or seemingly impossible the circumstances, and even more crucially, the constant aspiration towards the divine centrepoint that is our source. Humans exile themselves from this centrepoint, including those humans who pose as gurus and occult adepts. In fact, the ordinary and unassuming man in the street has a greater chance of inclusion in increased possibilities, given the right efforts, than the many spokesmen currently assuming mystical honours.

Humanity is now in a damaged state, with a standard of materialistic environment that brings widespread discontent. Yet this same materialism is rampant in supposed New Age centres, where it gains an even worse complexion.

I did not see anything like the situations some New Age enthusiasts wish to believe lie in the future. I am here contradicting their belief that everyone will be developing occult powers; that sensual gratifications can be unlimited; that obscenity is not an evil; that everyone can live more or less as they want, making their boldest dreams come true, secure in their unique personal creativity which can grant material success at every turn. As I saw the future, most of the humans on the globe will be absorbed in strenuous work in the interests of sheer survival, as part of a very difficult environmental transition that will be attended by much hardship. All the aberrant values of today will have to go, including the aberrant "New Age" values which are fast contributing to cultural decline as much as any other single factor. There will be no "Golden Age" in the poetic sense, though there will be an increase in the beginnings of insight, leading to true comprehension of the purpose of life. This latter achievement is very rare, much rarer than is commonly assumed, and is worth any and every effort the human self can make towards it, for

life is ephemeral and swiftly passes, yet the centre of gravity formed within us by these efforts *endures*, and is our eventual guarantee of release from all bondage. Otherwise, the individual cycle repeats, or makes fresh innovations, as uselessly as before.

Time is a complex structure with many gradients, and a restreaming process is operative when each major cycle of time ends. I saw it as a time-bridge, a separation of those souls with evolutionary potential from those who had wasted their potential and were producing violent and degenerate emanations which have saturated the entire planet. It is only this time-bridge that can produce a "Golden Age" or anything resembling it. Romantic notions will not suffice here, since the content of the new cycle of time depends entirely upon what the participants contribute to it.

Spirituality is currently at a very low ebb. The glamour and easy options provided by New Age practitioners have nullified completely the impact of genuine non-sensationalist teachers, and have neutralised and retarded God-knows how many potential students of the evolutionary process. The old traditions are lost; thrown away in an excess of "do what you want" with no mention at all of the ultimate consequence. In fact, it is no longer generally believed that there *is* a consequence. This "anything goes" syndrome was bequeathed to us by the followers of Crowley, the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Satya Sai Baba, and others, and can be classified as subversive infiltration.

By the latter phrase, I mean the usurpation of genuine developmental values, which always involve a high degree of personal discipline. This usurpation is currently furthered by many New Age "therapists" and "counsellors," as they like to call themselves. They are a new plague of Western guru, displaying an egotism and ignorance which is impossible to deal with in any form of rational confrontation – even, be it noted by the more scientific, when the questioner evinces sympathy with the better and more viable concepts adhering to the New Age movement. I used to say, "The entire New Age movement needs now to take sound stock of itself," but events have moved beyond such optimism. This movement is incapable of such analysis, and led by such experimenters as Dr. Stanislav Grof, can only serve as a warning to those who retain their sanity and their principles. Experimentation with "techniques" is not knowledge of inner dimensions, but instead proof of ignorance, despite the simplistic New Age notion that everyone can develop their inner faculties. In practice such a sentiment is impossible, and merely lends itself to the worst forms of exploitation – producing a wave of greedy occultists who dispense with elementary cautions, and who indulge in everything from voodoo to verbal obscenity.

Nobody can develop inner faculties safely without sound preparation. The preliminaries of genuine spiritual unfoldment are only ignored

at the peril of the practitioners. What is really being produced by the New Age is a breed of manipulating monster who has no inner knowledge, no self-control, no scruple, and no effective credential in spiritual matters. Their teachings are often dangerous at worst, and distorted and misleading at best.

The real teaching on inner development has always been in existence. It does not need any "New Age" to come into being. Nor should it ever be confused with therapy. It is an intact science, and does not experiment, which is a dangerous pastime suited only to organizations like the Esalen Institute in California. Its exponents comprise the equivalent of a profession, but many of them conceal their credentials in the face of ignorance. They are only interested in dedicated students, who are always in a minority, following a realistic law of averages applying to human endeavours and shortcomings.

Guidance in the endeavour of spiritual unfoldment can only come from those who have gone ahead and completed within themselves the process they set before others (if they ever choose to do so, that is). This endeavour, owing to the pitfalls involved, cannot be accomplished without a guide, and those who promote the erroneous belief that no teacher is necessary are guilty of sidetracking thousands of people for their own petty ends. The New Age concepts of "creating your own reality" and "self-development" are cases in point. These concepts further the interest of nobody except New Age course tutors who, without sufficient interior growth and its resultant knowledge, quote each other like parrots. The confusion of the personality self with something truly creative is symptomatic of the frequent blunders made by these people. They do not even know what to develop, let alone who to develop, or how. This might go a long way towards explaining why so many of them are the incarnations of egotism, despite the glib talk about non-ego that tends to justify their roles.

One of the major problems encountered by would-be students of the spiritual is the discernment of a genuine teacher – a category far outnumbered by charlatans and opportunists. Only absolute honesty, sincerity, and integrity in any potential student can succeed here, since those with clouded motivations are very prone to following the spurious, who reassure their failings. Some people only learn through disillusionment and tragedy. An ability to discriminate is not easily gained in many cases, matched by the delusions and vanity of those who purport to teach what they do not understand. Real high grade teachers in this area are very rare – so rare that it is practically impossible in the current climate of acute misinformation to describe their traits successfully. They are the very opposite of the

brash commercialists who are eager to enrol pupils at every turn. They sometimes use intermediaries, and will not always themselves teach directly, a further complexity for those who do not understand what spiritual unfoldment actually involves. There can be no effective teaching unless the "destiny challenge," as I have chosen to call it, is successfully negotiated. Until that is accomplished, people are merely devotees, enquirers, seekers, learners, or whatever – but not active disciples, who are also rare.

This "destiny challenge" works on many levels, depending upon the capacity of the individual. It applies very much to the possibilities of spiritual unfoldment – which entails a very lengthy and exacting training process, with its own specific rules. One of these rules is that occult powers are *not* to be sought in any way, since these powers are dangerous to oneself and to others, and can wreck all possibilities of inner development. Serious backslides can and do occur on the inner path, and it would be thoroughly irresponsible to introduce anyone to this "path" without ascertaining that they are equipped for it, both morally and spiritually. It would be like an experienced mountaineer urging people with no experience of climbing to scale Mount Everest. The only people who would do this are maniacs, but there are many of these in the New Age movement and its related cults.

It is not possible to compromise this perspective in reality. Such compromise is frequently attempted in ignorance however, and the commercial New Age is a testimony to the ignorance of modern Western tyros. It is not possible to teach people who display such ignorance, which is symptomatic of their being so anxious to teach anyone whose attention they can arrest by sensational means.

Surveys of New Age literature in America have shown that its readership predominantly comprises affluent women in the over-35 age bracket. Such facts are not particularly flattering to Western feminine discernment, and nor to Western education, as many of these women have been through university. Many of them confuse a desire for health and therapy with an interest in the spiritual, a deep-rooted confusion which has lent enormous scope to the therapy bandwagon, which often masquerades as having a spiritual relevance in catering for the uninformed demand. People who resort to fashionable therapies in the hope of curing anxieties and stress are often at the mercy of skilful business minds rather than competent psychotherapists, and even when the latter are involved, the situation should never be confused with a spiritual process. People who desire therapy are frequently incapable of deeper commitments, an unwelcome truth in areas of emotion where discernment has not yet developed intuition or the need for it.

As for the topic of spiritual healers, so-called, I have met some of these individuals who were so physically depleted and psychologically unstable that, if they "laid hands" on even a robust recipient, it would be sufficient to hospitalize the latter if any transmission of energies *did* actually occur.

The subject of negative energies is not understood by the New Age clientele, largely through lack of valid information. Such information (where acknowledged) is all too often suppressed in the interests of profitable groupings and sensational paperbacks. I feel justified in concluding that without the backbone of uninformed feminine demand, the current spate of misleading "paranormal" literature would lose much of its commercial edge, despite the activities of the many male writers who capitalise upon ignorance of spiritual truths – writers who vary from the "Sufi" inanities of Reshad Feild to the far more damaging preoccupation with obscenity demonstrated by Colin Wilson and others. The more analytical males rightly depreciate the increasing proliferation of "sex and magic" books produced by suspect publishing firms. Yet this very unhealthy trend (which often causes much stress, and even personal injury, I fear), has actually been aided by Jungian confusions amongst the more academic. These Jungian confusions will not penetrate to the core of evolutionary development, but will merely serve to confuse the public and academic readerships involved. These confusions amount to imagining that people like Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh or Bubba Da Free John can impart spirituality. The latter is a Westerner who requires the ridiculous nickname of "Heart Master Da Love-Ananda" to capture the attention of those susceptible to this wavelength, which includes a book distribution company flooding the American market with some very dubious literature with titles like "The New Channel to Personal Power" and "Sexual Secrets." There is really only one subject involved here: commerce. But many people first have to learn the difference between such distractions and spirituality. Yet such distractions are increasingly being aimed at the younger generation, who risk the permanent atrophydom of their faculties of discernment in becoming victims of these trends.

Far from constituting any kind of imminent "Golden Age," the so-called New Age is buttressing an extended dark age of very serious proportions. It takes to an even worse extreme the rabid economic and sensual materialism of the twentieth century, and with its concoction of subliminal mind techniques, is as much of a menace as chemical weapons if the truth were more widely known. Most of the persons involved are merely using the subject of "inner development" for illegitimate purposes of exploitation. They are ignorant of the complexity of the spiritual path and have not even learnt the

elementary fact that the lower stages of this path are *not* desirable, and that genuine teachers will not allow their pupils to indulge in the attributes of these dangerous stages of unfledged development, which can seriously magnify the ego-nature. This has been known in attested Sufi lore and history for well over a thousand years, and has much earlier origins. Persons undergoing these immature stages are prone to flamboyant lifestyles and preoccupation with psychic and allied powers, including the power of sexuality (one of the worst karmic bindings). Many of them assume that they are accomplished teachers, and create hindering *karma* of the most intractable kind both for themselves and others who follow them.

The moral code of spiritual development is a crucial necessity, however unfashionable this is in the present decadent society.

In my own experience, I have found that basic information is necessary for students before any more daring ventures are undertaken. Literacy is vital in this respect, and yet literacy is increasingly undermined by New Age therapy.

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